M. CHUDNOVSKY

DANCING TO FAME

It is not likely that anyone who saw Igor Moiseyev's Ensemble will ever forget it. Its youth, beauty, superb technique and extraordinary idiom never fail to captivate the onlooker. They fill him with joy of living and assert the ideal of man's beauty. It is this that lies behind the triumphant successes of Moiseyev's dancers abroad. The joyful and lyrical dances of nations, and the dances of fiery passion or lofty reserve reveal the spiritual world of man, his urge for light and progress.

The humanistic spirit of Moiseyev's dance arrangements conquers the hearts of men. It rouses the enthusiasm of an optimist, convinces the pessimist of the beauty of living, and disarms the skeptic.

Igor Moiseyev is an enthusiastic and ardent searcher of new paths in dancing. At the same time he is a connoisseur of classical ballet and a gifted student of folk dancing.

The more than twenty-year history of his ensemble offers food for deep thought about the development of the folk dance.

The author does not intend to embrace exhaustively all the diverse facets of Moiseyev's technique. He trusts, however, that his story about the splendid dancing that has conquered hearts in many countries, will rouse interest among people who are fond of the ensemble and its splendid dancers.

The performers were anonymous, but it would be difficult to single out any individual for excellence. They are a magnificent team and dance non-stop as joyously and apparently effortlessly as they breathe. ("The Daily Telegraph and Morning Post," Nov. 9, 1955.)

* * *

...it is the kind of dancing and music calculated to fire the blood of the coldest fish. ...Doubtless one should clear one's mind of all thought of politics and enjoy the Moiseyev company as the highly enjoyable company it is. ("Wall Street Journal," April 16, 1958.)

* * *

...it is a superb organization, talented, trained to the last notch, full of a genuine joy of performing, and with a vitality that is just this side of superhuman. ("New York Times," June 21, 1958.)

* * *

La renommée de son ensemble incomparable par le dynamisme, la variété, et une exceptionnelle fraicheur dans l'inspiration poétique, a eu déjà en France des échos dans la presse. Nous avons gré à Moisséiev d'avoir su traduire, à travers la danse populaire un sentiment poétique, un rêve d'amour, qui conserve la fraicheur de celui d'un adolescent. ("Combat," 29 sept. 1955.)

Igor Moiseyev

M. CHUDNOVSKY

FOLK DANCE COMPANY OF THE U.S.S.R.

Igor Moiseyev

ART DIRECTOR

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ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ АНСАМБЛЬ НАРОДНОГО ТАНЦА СССР

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The present-day world is small. Aviation has broken down barriers of distance and has made it possible to cross oceans and continents in a few hours. Important events occurring in one part of the globe are soon known to the whole world.

And what is true of events in general is also true of developments in the arts. An outstanding achievement in any of the arts cannot remain unknown for long.

Every nation cherishes dearly its own art but is always ready to welcome with open arms the arts of other nations.

Art has no difficulty in breaking through frontiers. Paintings, books and songs travel without passports or visas.

In recent years the Moiseyev dance company, known in the Soviet Union as the Ensemble of Folk Dances of the U.S.S.R., has been singularly successful as an envoy of Soviet art. It has won the sincere admiration of audiences in many lands and has helped to popularize and revive the art of the folk dance. It is now commonly acknowledged that the Moiseyev company ranks foremost among the world's exponents of the folk dance.

Spectators in various parts of the world have watched the Moiseyev company perform the dignified and pensive, or impetuous Russian folk dances, the fiery Ukrainian *Gopak*, bubbling over with merriment, the dashing Cossack dances, the spirited dances of the Caucasus, the passionate *Moldovenyaska* and many others.

Almost everyone likes to watch folk dancing. It is enjoyed equally by the man who spends his life in building machines and the man who devotes his time to teaching children. Both the ordinary man and the

artist find it refreshing. The artist is fascinated by its play of form, its wisdom and versatility, and can draw inspiration from it for his own work.

All that is best in folk dancing has now come to be associated with the Moiseyev dance company. Why is this?

It is because this company has shown itself capable of taking over and developing the folk-dance heritage of the many nationalities inhabiting the U.S.S.R. Moreover it has steeped itself in Russian artistic traditions, particularly those of Russian and Soviet ballet.

The present work is a brief outline of the history of this company. It deals with the sources it draws on, and gives some information about its dancers and its organizer, director and chief choreographer Igor Moiseyev. It is also an attempt, on the basis of certain theoretical research work done by Igor Moiseyev, and the author's own observations over many years in the field of classical and folk dancing, to assess stages in the development of this company and discuss some of its methods of work.

THE FOLK DANCE

The manifold folk dances of the world present a fascinating subject for study. A history of these dances is in large measure a story of the life of the nationalities in whose midst they were born, reflecting ways of living, customs and culture.

A study of the folk dance takes us back into ancient time. We know that the first dances were associated with work or reflected man's conceptions of the world around him. They bore only a faint resemblance to dancing as we understand it today. Generally speaking, they were movements of the body representing the motions of hunting wild beasts, tilling the soil, or rocking a baby to sleep. Yet for all their naiveté, they

expressed quite well what the dancer was driving at and gave an idea of the events he wanted to portray. Hunting dances, for example, told of the dangers of the chase and what luck the hunter had had. Women's dances conveyed a mother's anxiety for her child.

War and ritual dances appeared later when man began to go to war and to worship gods. Finally appeared the choral round dances which were an emotional expression of man's joys and sorrows.

Folk dances have evolved over the centuries. As time went on they shed the inessentials and retained the principal elements which particularly clearly reflect the national traditions.

In this connection Nikolai Gogol wrote: "... a proud and warlike people will express these very features in their dances; the dances of a carefree and liberty-loving nation are bound to be free, sweeping and delightfully impetuous; people living in sultry lands imbue their dances with their own voluptuousness, passion and ardour."

Tolstoi expressed his admiration for the Russian folk dance in his description of Natasha's graceful and inspired performance in *War and Peace.*

Tolstoi writes:

"Natasha threw off the shawl from her shoulders, ran forward to face 'Uncle,' and setting her arms akimbo, made a motion with her shoulders and struck an attitude.

"Where, how, and when had this young countess, educated by an émigrée French governess, imbibed from the Russian air she breathed that spirit, and learned that manner of dancing, which the *pas de châle,* one would have thought, had effaced long ago?

"The spirit and the manner were inimitable, untutored, Russian, such as 'Uncle' expected from her. As soon as she had struck her pose, smiling triumphantly, proudly, roguishly, the fear that had at first seized Nikolai and the others that she might not do the right thing passed away, and they were already admiring her.

"She did the right thing and so well, so absolutely well, that Anisya Fyodorovna, who had at once handed her the handkerchief she needed for the dance, had tears in her eyes, though she laughed as she watched

that slender, graceful countess, brought up in silk and velvet, who was able to understand that which was in Anisya, and in Anisya's father, and in her aunt, and in her mother, and in every Russian man and woman."

Such was the attitude to the folk dance of two great Russian writers, Gogol and Tolstoi. But that of the authorities in Russia was quite different.

The folk dance was looked down upon in pre-revolutionary Russia, its development as an art in no way encouraged.

The classical ballet that flourished in the imperial theatres of St. Petersburg and Moscow clung to aristocratic and esoteric traditions. Its audiences in powdered wigs and crinolines, in skin-tight hose, elegant frock-coats and Empire gowns found the traditional ballet very much to their taste with its dryades and nymphs, and demure shepherdesses and peasant girls who bore not the remotest resemblance to their counterparts in real life. In the audience diamonds sparkled, fans moved seductively, while gods and goddesses emerged "ex machina."

But among the common people the traditions of quite a different type of dancing were kept alive. On the outskirts of some far-off Russian or Ukrainian village the lads, girls, and other folk would gather of an evening or on a holiday. And hard as their lot was, for they were serfs, they filled the air with the sounds of the accordion, the balalaika or the horn and burst into sprightly dance. The coloured embroidery of the men's shirts, the quaint patterns of the women's costumes, the beads and jangling necklaces, flashed brightly against the fresh green of spring or the rich hues of autumn.

The repertoire of the imperial ballet companies catered for the tastes of their aristocratic public. And the latter regarded the ballet as nothing more than pleasant and light entertainment. It was not the business of the ballet to show strong feeling or portray emotions experienced by the common people. Ballet was ballet, and had to remain so. What was demanded of it was enchanting scenery, beautiful dancers and technical virtuosity. Nothing of serious significance was allowed to penetrate into it. The aristocracy did not see and did not wish to see in the serf actor

Samson Galperin, a composer, is the chief conductor of the company's orchestra

Tamara Mozalevskaya (Golovanova), dancer

Lidiya Timofeyeva (Skryabina), dancer

Ivan Kartashov, dancer

Irina Chegodayeva (Koneva), dancer

Tamara Zeifert, Moiseyev company dancer

Nina Kuznetsova, dancer

Lev Golovanov, dancer of the Moiseyev company

Viktor Aristov, dancer of the Moiseyev company

Vasily Savin, dancer

Sergei Tsvetkov, dancer

Anatoly Fyodorov, dancer

Valeryan Arsenyev, dancer

Good Fellows dance from the **Russian Suite.** Solo dancers (from left to right): Vyacheslav Baldin, Lev Golovanov and Boris Petrov

(and most of the theatre companies of the period were composed of gifted serfs) an exponent of genuine art.

Nevertheless in the eighteenth century some of Russia's eminent composers made an attempt to introduce folk motifs into the ballet. Hence folk dances began to penetrate into the choreography of the new ballets. Carnival or market-place scenes had many folk dances in them. Yet these endeavours to bring the folk dance to the ballet stage were not very successful. For one thing, choreographers failed to catch and convey the true spirit of folk dancing. They made use only of the external pattern of the dance. But even these feeble attempts were cut short in 1806 when the Grand Opera in St. Petersburg became a court theatre.

Later a number of outstanding choreographers in Russia, among them Ivan Lesogorov, Charles Didelot, Jules Perrot, Adam Gluszkowski,* and Artur Saint-Léon, persistently introduced folk dance elements into the ballets they staged, aspiring towards true-to-life portrayals. But they lacked consistency in their efforts and, in addition, they met with opposition from the theatre managements.

The great dancers of the Russian classical ballet, such as Istomina, Sankovskaya, Teleshova, admired by Pushkin, Griboyedov, Belinsky and Herzen, and later the world-renowned Pavlova, Geltser, Preobrazhenskaya, Karsavina, Roslavleva, Kriger, Gorsky, Tikhomirov, Fokine and Nijinsky, although of progressive views, confined their activities strictly to the realm of dance performance in which they achieved the highest perfection.

Throughout its history the classical ballet kept aloof from the progressive struggle for folk and native themes** which in music thanks to the works of Glinka, the "Big Five," and Chaikovsky, and in painting to the "Peredvizhniki" group, infused native art with the fresh blood-stream

* Adam Gluszkowski was the originator of ballets based on such of Pushkin's poems as *Ruslan and Ludmila* and *The Captive of the Caucasus.*

** *The Humpbacked Horse,* choreography by Saint-Leon and music by the Italian composer Puni, was the only Russian ballet on the repertoire. Although extremely talented, Saint-Leon, knowing absolutely nothing about Russian folk dancing, was unable to produce a Russian ballet in the real sense of the word. The result was a pseudo-folk spectacle, extremely mannered and stylized.

of realism. But in the ballets presented at the court theatres any sort of subject-matter, idea or plot were almost entirely absent. These ballets were for the most part elaborate spectacles devoid of ideas, real feelings and passions. The music was written for the most part by composers who were neither highly gifted nor first-class professionals.

An exception in this respect were the dances in Glinka's operas which laid the cornerstone of native ballet music. In the Polish dances in *Ivan Susanin* and in the oriental dances in *Ruslan and Ludmila* the composer had grasped and conveyed very effectively their folk pattern. The music itself with its deep penetration of the national element dictated genuinely folk forms of the dance. The tradition set by Glinka was continued and further developed in his own works such as *Waltz Fantasy* and *Kamarinskaya,* as well as in Mussorgsky's *Persian Dances,* in Borodin's *Polovets Dances,* and in the dance music in the operatic and symphonic works of Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov and Chaikovsky.

In the sixties of the last century, a period of great social stir, which witnessed a heightened interest in the life of the common people, a number of eminent dancers among them Muravyova, Lebedeva, Stukolkina, Geltser, Gerdt, Troitsky, tried to interpret their roles in a more realistic manner. At this time, too, Nekrasov and Saltykov-Shchedrin wrote ardently and passionately on the ballet, taking up the cudgels for a ballet close to the hearts of the people and understandable to them.

An attempt to introduce folk motifs into the ballet was made by Sergei Sokolov, an outstanding Russian dancer and choreographer, when he staged *Ivan Kupala Eve* in the Bolshoi Theatre in 1867, a ballet based on Russian folk dance melodies.

The end of the nineteenth century saw the appearance of Chaikovsky's wonderful ballets *Sleeping Beauty* and *Nutcracker,* Glazunov's *Raimonda, Seasons* and *The Contest of Adamis,* with their subtle, realistic imagery and music deeply integrated with the content and the development of the action. The new elements Chaikovsky brought to ballet music were of the greatest importance. They were in glaring opposition to the old choreographic stereotypes and the doll-like sugarishness of the dance. Moreover this was a period when such outstanding and progressive-

minded choreographers as L. Ivanov, M. Petipa and later A. Gorsky and M. Fokine worked in the ballet.

Beginning with 1909, after its appearance in Paris, and later in London, the Russian ballet gained world recognition and became the dominant spirit in world ballet. But even at that time, despite democratic tendencies within the ballet now fighting against the old conventional views and conservative tastes of theatre managements, choreography still remained by force of tradition aloof from the great fountain-head of folk dance art.

In Soviet times there has been an entirely new approach to the ballet. The notion that the ballet is an art of set conventional forms has been discarded. The ballet has come to be regarded as an art which is constantly developing and enriching itself.

Since the art of the dance had flourished from time immemorial in the midst of the people it was held that the ballet could expand and grow only by drawing inspiration from the folk dance.

With this thought uppermost in their minds, Soviet choreographers, composers and dramatists began their work in various ballet genres, producing heroic, romantic, elegiac and tragic ballets.

While perfecting and enriching the art of the dance, Soviet choreographers set themselves the aim of creating a ballet which would be a happy synthesis of classical choreography, pantomime and folk dance. The rich classical heritage of the Russian ballet was taken over and developed. At the same time the Soviet ballet rid itself of the stilted forms and conservatism of the old ballet, as well as of the primitive ballet plots, and rejected the idea that the ballet was neutral and timeless. Close integration with the folk dance has been one of the fundamental principles underlying the development of the Soviet ballet.

Folk art is that fountain-head which, according to an old Russian fairy-tale, has the power to revive the dead, to infuse new vigour and to give joy. But besides being a well of strength for the classical ballet the folk dance has in its own right come to occupy an important place on the Soviet dance stage.

* * *

The première of R. Glière's *Red Flower*, the first Soviet ballet, at the Bolshoi Theatre in 1927, may be regarded as a landmark in ballet history. Its success was stupendous. Its name was on everyone's lips, provoking comment and discussion. It came at a time when Soviet ballet was only just beginning to develop and was going through a period of experimentation. There were people who regarded it with distrust. *Red Flower* dispelled all doubts. With it Soviet choreography scored its first important victory.

Everything about *Red Flower* as a ballet was new: the subject, dealing with the class struggle in China, the relationship of the dancing to the music, and the composer's bold use of folk dance and song motifs.

Particularly happy was Glière's choice of the well-known sailor song *Yablochko* which he wove into the pattern of his music. It is hard to think of a melody that conveys so well the cheerfulness and joviality characteristic of Soviet sailors.

The new spirit with which Glière imbued his music, the introduction of folk melodies, the stirring contemporary theme—these were all reasons for the great success of *Red Flower.*

Soon after *Red Flower* Asafyev's new ballets appeared. They were *Flames of Paris* (a ballet in the heroic style, with the Marseillaise and the Carmagnole, French Revolution songs, blended into its music), *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* and *The Captive of the Caucasus.* In the latter two ballets, based on poems by Pushkin, the composer conveys the style and character of Russian music of Pushkin's time. Asafyev had forged firm links between his work and folk music.

In the first act of *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai,* the composer, inspired by Polish national music, wrote a *Krakowiak,* a *Mazurka* and a *Polonaise.* In *The Captive of the Caucasus* he made wide use of Caucasian melodies.

The first Soviet ballets are striking examples of how classical ballet can be enriched by the folk dance. And here it must be said that the folk dance by contact with the classical dance also gains much in the way of polish, depth of content and means of expressiveness.

Much more can be said about the development of the Soviet ballet and the important place that the folk dance has come to occupy in it, but that would mean wandering from the main subject. However mention must be made of some of the Soviet ballets in which the folk choreography looms large and plays a significant part. These are Prokofyev's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella,* Khachaturyan's *Spartacus* and *Gayané,* A. Krein's *Laurencia,* A. Machavariani's *Othello,* M. Chulaki's *The Mock Bridegroom* and *Youth,* V. Oransky's *Merry Wives of Windsor,* and finally Solovyov-Sedoi's *Taras Bulba* (after Gogol), Kara Karayev's *Seven Beauties* and *Thunder Path,* S. Hajibekov's *Gyulshen,* A. Badalbeili's *Maiden Tower.*

Heart of the Mountains, a ballet on a historical subject (a 19th century peasant uprising), is by the Georgian musician Balanchivadze and bears evidence of the composer's considerable talent. Folk dance music of the Guri and Svan peoples has been woven into the musical pattern.

In 1940 a Tatar composer, Yarullin, who fell in the war, wrote *Shuralé,* a ballet based on a fairy-tale and abounding in old Tatar folk song and dance melodies.

However, it is not the task of this booklet to examine the paths of development of the Soviet ballet. The subject has been touched upon only because it is hardly possible to discuss folk dancing and the work done by Igor Moiseyev in this field without linking them with the problems of the ballet.

Can the folk dance be revitalized, can it realize its great potentialities within the pattern of the classical ballet, which is so tied to tradition and conventional forms?

This question Igor Moiseyev asked himself when he was a young choreographer at the Bolshoi Theatre company passionately interested in folk art and the folk dance.

His answer was no.

It was necessary, he knew, to seek for new forms, both artistic and organizational, to enable the folk dance to develop fully. And Igor Moiseyev, then a young man, pondered over these forms.

IGOR MOISEYEV

Igor Alexandrovich Moiseyev was born in 1906 in Kiev. His father was a lawyer, his mother a costume designer. When Igor was three years old the family went to Paris where the mother's brother, an architect, lived.

In Paris their neighbours were lovers and connoisseurs of the ballet. The neighbours' little girl, Igor's playmate, was quite a talented dancer. By imitating her Igor soon mastered her "technique" and performed on the points with great effect.

Igor's parents returned to Russia when the boy was seven years old. For a year they lived in the Ukraine, in Poltava. Here Igor started school, and then they moved to Moscow.

In Moscow, as in Poltava, Igor was a very good pupil, showing an aptitude for drawing and a fondness for poetry. He went in for sports, but he did not think seriously of choreography yet.

However his natural gifts made him realize that dancing was his true calling. He joined the V. I. Mosolova Studio, one of the well-known private dancing studios of the time. Greatly impressed by the boy's talent and physical assets Mosolova herself helped him later to gain admission to the Bolshoi Theatre's choreographic school.

There were a great many applicants at that time and only two were accepted. Asaf Messerer, who later became one of the Soviet Union's most outstanding dancers and teachers of the ballet, and Igor Moiseyev.

From the very first Moiseyev showed that he possessed two important qualities–patience and a great zest for work. These have remained with him to this day.

With amazing assiduity he studied everything connected with the art of the dance, his knowledge soon extending far beyond the school cur-

riculum. While he was still at the ballet school, and even more so after graduation, Igor Moiseyev became deeply interested in that vast but little known field of choreography–the folk dance, whose great resources have hardly been tapped by the professional dancer.

Moiseyev graduated from the choreographic school of the Bolshoi Theatre in 1924, at the age of eighteen. Subsequently he danced solo and leading roles in the Bolshoi Theatre ballet company, appearing as Raoul in Schubert's *Theolinda,* Joseph in S. Vasilenko's *Joseph the Beautiful,* Mathô in A. Arends' *Salammbô,* Phoenix in Glière's *Red Flower.* Five years later he is choreographer at the Bolshoi Theatre.

And even his very first ballet productions such as *Salammbô, The Football Player* and *The Three Fat Men* show signs of a search for new means of expression.

His production of *The Three Fat Men* (music by V. Oransky), based on a story by Y. Olesha, at the Bolshoi Theatre, made him known as a rising choreographer and proved to be a landmark in his career. It was generally agreed that he had succeeded in investing his production with a vivid, emotional expressiveness, rarely achieved even in the drama. His talent and ingenuity as a choreographer helped him to re-create with amazing vigour this tale of bold fantasy on the ballet stage.

He spent many summers travelling in the various republics and regions of the Soviet Union. He visited the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Tajikistan, the banks of the Volga, and the Urals, everywhere trying to penetrate into the character, ways of living and customs of the people, and above all to learn as much as possible of the various dance heritages of the nationalities inhabiting his vast homeland. Later, when his fame as a choreographer was firmly established, he constantly pursued his studies of various peoples and their dances, wherever he might be–in all parts of his own country, in the towns of China, amidst the ruins of ancient Greece, in the European capitals. Moiseyev wrote that folk art had revealed his true calling to him.

So although Moiseyev was able to realize his talents in the sphere of

classical ballet, he grew more and more possessed by the idea of wholly devoting himself to the folk dance and even of creating a folk ballet.

At no time in his career, however, has he entirely severed connections with the classical ballet, aiming to inject into it the fresh blood of the folk dance.*

That was when Soviet art first emerged on the international scene. Soviet dancers won high praise at the World Folk Dance Festival in London, held in 1935, and the guest performances of the Song and Dance Ensemble of the Soviet Army in Paris and Prague were a signal success.

An event which proved of great consequence to Igor Moiseyev's career was a festival of U.S.S.R. folk dances held in Moscow in 1936. On the suggestion of the Festival Government Committee Igor Moiseyev took charge as chief choreographer. He brought to the job his characteristic energy and good judgement.

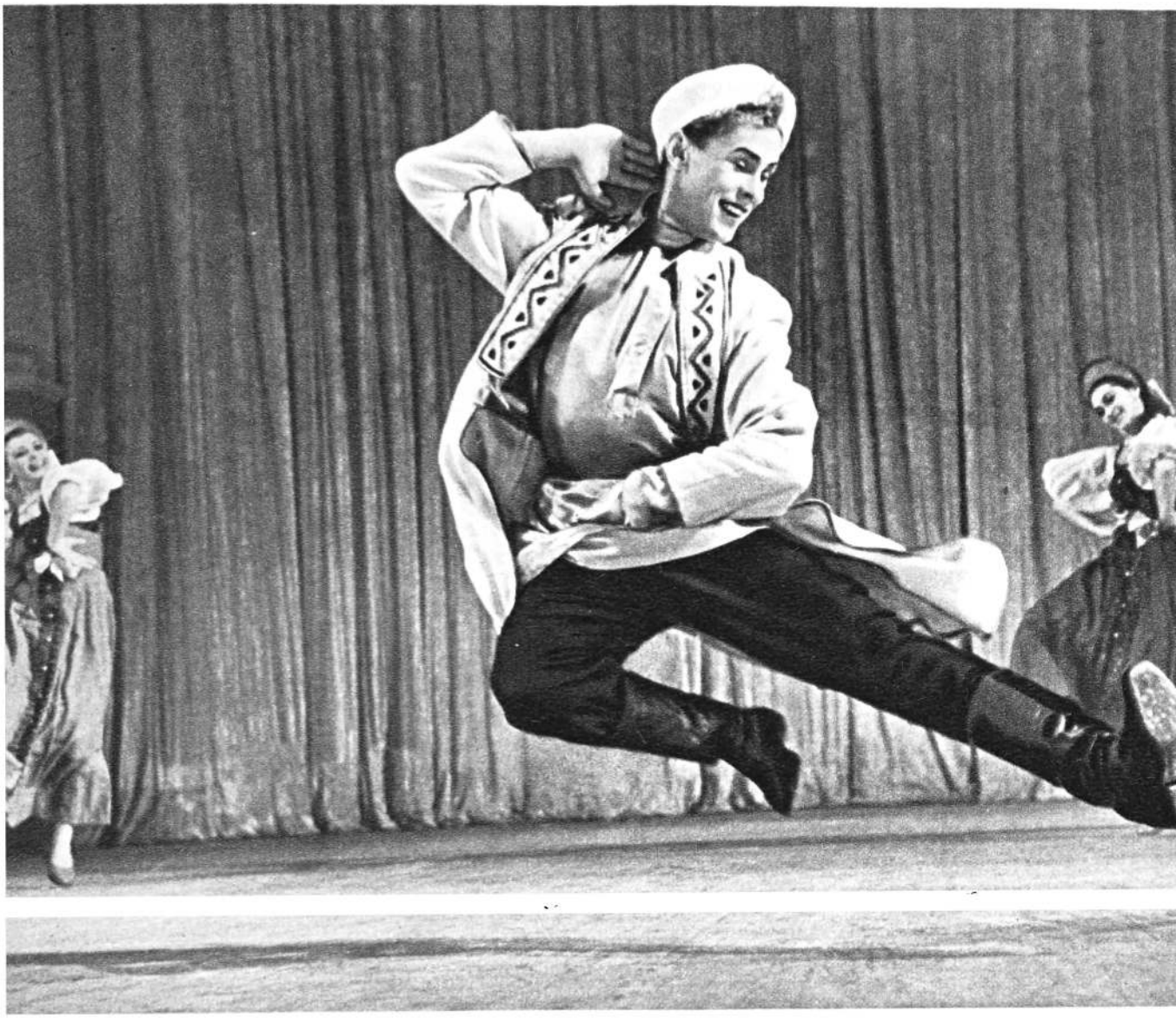
After this first experience he found himself over and over again in charge of festivals of national art, amateur dance festivals and the choreographic sections of sports parades. He was also frequently nominated as one of the judges at international youth festivals.

The folk dances of the many republics of the Soviet Union were shown at the 1936 festival. During this festival Moiseyev was able to see a diversity of folk dances, varying from nationality to nationality, in all their dazzling brilliance of colour and costume. And it made him feel all the more convinced that he must henceforth concentrate on folk dancing.

It was during this festival that Moiseyev got the idea of forming a professional company to perform folk dances; and he picked the first members of this company from those who took part in the festival. Many of them were untrained, their technique far from that of the pro-

* Quite recently (in March 1958) when he produced A. Khachaturyan's *Spartacus*, a highly dramatic ballet in the heroic style, at the Bolshoi Theatre, Moiseyev gave fresh evidence of the vigour of his talent in ballet choreography.

Spartacus as a subject for a ballet had long fascinated Moiseyev. "Once the idea of staging *Spartacus* came to me, it did not leave me for a single day," he wrote.



Here it is—the fiery Russian folk dance. **Travushka,** an episode from the **Russian Suite.** Boris Shchukin is shown in the foreground

White Snows, a dance of swan girls from the **Winter** part of the **Russian Suite**

fessional. But they possessed qualities he set great store by—talent and a passionate love of folk dancing.

When Igor Moiseyev put his suggestion for the establishment of the company to the Government it was agreed to.

Apart from amateur dancers a number of young talented graduates of choreographic schools and professional ballet dancers who were folk dance enthusiasts joined the newly-formed company. It was called the State Ensemble of U.S.S.R. Folk Dances and Igor Moiseyev was appointed its art director.

TWENTY-TWO YEARS

The Moiseyev dance company celebrated its 22nd anniversary in 1959. In the course of the twenty-two years of its existence it has developed into a dance ensemble of the first order.

Today there is no dance company in the country, whether professional or amateur—and there are thousands of dance groups in the Soviet Union —which does not study the artistic experience of this group and the new ideas of its leader and choreographer Igor Moiseyev.

Such is the reputation this group enjoys today. But success did not come overnight. At the very beginning, when the group was just being formed, there were sceptics who prophesied complete failure for Igor Moiseyev. Many thought he was making a big mistake in abandoning the Bolshoi, the leading ballet company in the country. There was much heated argument as to the outcome of his new undertaking. Later, when the new company set to work, there were those who tried to belittle its work, to make Moiseyev's persistent striving appear futile by drawing a sharp line of distinction between the classical and the folk dance, pos-

ing them as mutually exclusive phenomena. The group had to wage a constant battle against those who stood for the old conventional dance forms and rigid patterns.

However, a deep faith in the correctness of what it was doing helped the company to forge ahead all the time. Nothing could shake Igor Moiseyev's belief in the great possibilities the folk dance held for the professional. Moreover he was now more deeply than ever in love with the folk dance.

The members of the new company held their first meeting on February 10th, 1937, in Moscow, in a house in Leontyevsky Street. Forty-five people were present. The eldest was Igor Moiseyev, who was then thirty, while the youngest had hardly reached his majority. It is easy to imagine what high hopes burned in the hearts of the young people who had joined this new company, how eager they were to set to work and capture the world.

However, right at the outset they realized what prodigious effort they would have to make. It was necessary to achieve that perfection and harmony of movement which make up the polished pattern of the dance. And however much strain and exertion it cost to achieve this, the audience must never know or guess it.

It took more than six months of hard work for the company to prepare its first programme–long days and long hours of work. Igor Moiseyev and his dancers were constantly preoccupied with one idea–how to make their dance more expressive.

And the first programme–not only was it essential to exercise good judgement in choosing the dances for it, but the company's new approach to the art of the folk dance had to be formulated in it. And if it was not to have a new approach but follow the old path of either blindly copying folk dances on the stage or stylizing them, both methods being common enough at the time, what was the point of the company's existence?

"The task of our company," Igor Moiseyev wrote at the time, "is to create classic patterns of the folk dance, and while casting off all the

artificial and alien elements, to achieve a high degree of artistry in the performance of folk dances, to develop a number of old dances, and to influence the further shaping of the folk dance."

At its very inception the company set itself the aim of popularizing folk dances. Hence the notation and study of folk dances existing in the most out-of-the-way corners of the Soviet Union formed a large part of its work.

The company strove to revive the best examples of the folk dance, to bring out the beauty, heroic elements and optimism inherent in them. At the same time it worked to create new dances, reflecting the rich full life of the Soviet people.

One can say that with the emergence of the Moiseyev company and the wide popularity it gained the folk dance at last came into its own on the stage.

The company gave its opening performance in August 1937 at the open-air Green Theatre in Moscow. The programme included *Polyanka,* a Russian quadrille, the Ukrainian *Metelitsa, Kryzhachok,* a comical Byelorussian dance, *Khorumi,* a martial Georgian dance, and the whirling *Moldovenyaska.*

At its very first performance the company swept the audience off its feet. Here was something new. Here was talent in the interpretation of the folk dance. Igor Moiseyev's great gift and his wonderful understanding of the folk dance were now generally acknowledged. What could be more familiar to the Moscow audience than its own Russian folk dance with its spirited leaps and other well-known steps? Yet Moiseyev was able to find in it a new depth and content. He revealed to the amazed spectators a new world of thoughts, emotions and moods they never suspected existed in it. The dance was an enchanting study in contrasts. Delicate lyricism, unusual tenderness and deep feeling alternated with an ebullient recklessness.

After its first successful programme there was the problem of building up a repertoire. It was then that such numbers as *Kurd Suite,* the light and graceful *Chernomorochka,* the charming *Dance of the Kazan*

IGOR MOISEYEV TACKLES PROBLEMS OF THE FOLK DANCE

The art of the folk dance is a difficult one. In order to master it one requires, apart from hard physical grind, deep knowledge of the folk-lore background, a theoretical grounding and an understanding of the relation of the folk dance to other types of dance.

Igor Moiseyev wrote a number of articles in which he set out to evolve a theory of the folk dance. If we dismiss some minor points open to question, this theory has furnished on the whole quite a sound basis for practical work in the field of the folk dance.

What is Moiseyev's attitude to the classical ballet and to Russian ballet traditions?

Moiseyev paid tribute to the brilliant achievements of the Russian ballet school, to its high technical mastery and the world-famous dancers it had produced. He was fully aware of the important contribution the Russian ballet school had made to world choreography. But it was no less clear to him that art must not become encased in set forms if it is to go on developing. Art must follow life in its constant forward movement—he understood this at the very outset of his career. Therefore his attitude to the classical ballet was in many ways critical. Many of the conceptions upon which the old ballet was founded had become obsolete, he argued. And in the interests of the further development of choreography these must be discarded.

The traditional ballet could only give a conventional picture of reality, vague and far removed from real life. It lacked the means to portray many sides of human feeling and activity. True, some emotions, particularly in the realm of the romantic, found very vivid expression in the classical ballet. The love duet in *Swan Lake* and the first act of *Giselle* will never fail to move the hearts of the public. But contempo-

rary ballet was called upon to express a far richer life, with a wider range of feelings.

To bring to the stage as complete a picture as possible of contemporary life with all its new elements and new characters has been one of the greatest tasks confronting Soviet choreography. The new life is more intense, more colourful than the old, with a more dynamic rhythm, with swift movement and dazzling turns. Little wonder then that the *arabesques* and *attitudes* of the old ballet often fall short of expressing the new content of contemporary life. How can the ballet picture the variegated activity, the high hopes and brimming gaiety of the people, how convey through the medium of the dance the vigour and colour of the people's life? Igor Moiseyev's reply was—turn to the dances of the people themselves.

Folk art, whatever its form, is always on the side of good, always wholesome and optimistic. In folk-lore we find the vices denounced and held up to ridicule while praises are sung to man's better instincts. Folk-lore has influenced all forms of more sophisticated art. Writers, painters and composers of all time have drawn inspiration from it. Folk art, the art of the people, is a splendid means of educating the masses, for it can speak their own language, simple, colourful, and replete with wisdom.

Igor Moiseyev set great store by the educational value of folk art, this being one of the reasons why he decided to devote himself to the folk dance. It was his aim to make the dance a vital art serving the problems of the day, an art close to the heart of the masses and understandable to them.

Over and over again Igor Moiseyev attacked the conservative tendencies of the classical ballet which kept aloof from all new movements. He was among the first choreographers to understand that life itself was clamouring for expression on the ballet stage. New subjects and new characters and consequently new forms were on the order of the day.

Igor Moiseyev himself had a direct hand in the complex process whereby the old Russian ballet was transformed into the new Soviet

ballet. That process was a mass of contradictions, with a complete negation of all the achievements of the classical ballet on the one hand, and on the other a blind fetishism of the old ballet forms and traditions. And there was still another tendency–to regard the ballet as a museum piece that must be perfectly preserved and kept pure regardless of the demands made on it by the new age.

Igor Moiseyev regarded such outstanding Soviet ballets as R. Glière's *Red Flower*, B. Asafyev's *Flames of Paris*, and *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai*, S. Prokofyev's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cinderella*, A. Krein's *Laurencia* and A. Khachaturyan's *Gayané* as a transitory stage in the creation of a true ballet art of socialist realism vital enough to tackle modern themes. These themes had not yet found their way to the ballet stage–the new ballets that had appeared derived their subjects from Russian or world classics. There were also revivals of old ballets in a new spirit. But the classical ballet had as yet failed to do real justice to a contemporary theme.

While criticizing the classical ballet, Moiseyev maintained that it had many good traditions to be studied and assimilated. Among these were its high professional standards, its technical virtuosity and its great potentialities for expressing man's thoughts, feelings and moods. These traditions had to be further developed and enriched. But the new dance art capable of capturing the spirit of the socialist age had to draw on a much wider range of means of expression and not to be afraid of combining them.

It was natural, he argued, that the classical ballet should seek the vitality it needed for its further development in the folk dance. Steeped in the history and traditions of the people, in their struggles and searchings, their exploits, hopes and dreams, the folk dance was able to bring to the classical ballet a broader vision, more concrete images, a deeper understanding of a nation's history, more lifelike characters, a realistic outlook and inexhaustible optimism. Choreographers working in the field of the classical dance began to study the great wealth of themes and forms inherent in the folk dance and to think of ways and means of incorporating these into the classical ballet.

Tamara Zeifert and Lev Golovanov in the **Russian Suite**

Summer in the Russian village is the time for gay round dances. A scene from the **Russian Suite**

A picture from the pre-revolutionary life of the Moscow countryside. Irina Koneva and Mikhail Shishkin perform a comical scene at the village merrymaking (Nikolai Kosogorov appears in the part of the accordionist)

Igor Moiseyev, however, warned against indiscriminate fusion of classical and folk elements in the dance. He stressed the importance of finding ways of an organic marriage of these elements, whereby, far from conflicting with each other, each would complement the other. In such a fusion he saw the ballet of the future, the new choreographic art of the morrow.

Whereas the classical dance can enrich the folk dance with psychological and emotional depth, the folk dance is more concrete in subject-matter, livelier and more direct in appeal. It brings to the stage the white heat of struggle, the powerful breath of labour, or the whirling gaiety of festivity. Given a combination of the poetic expressiveness of the classical ballet with the very real imagery of folk-lore it is possible to create a new form of choreographic spectacle on a contemporary theme. This is the ideal which the Moiseyev dancers set themselves.

Moiseyev realized full well that new subject-matter required new forms. The old forms were like the hard green sheath round a flower bud, preventing it from bursting open. As a medium for expressing a contemporary theme and re-creating the life of the people on the stage they were sorely inadequate.

Another drawback of the classical ballet was its inability to use the *corps de ballet* to best advantage and its dependence on star performers. The latter had to be brilliant while the rest were more or less a colourless mass, a mere background for the leading dancers, hardly more important than the décor.

But the new Soviet ballets were based on modern or historical subjects. They abounded in mass scenes. The life and struggle of the masses commanded supreme attention. The sons and daughters of the people emerged as the principal heroes of the new ballets, as the flesh and blood of the whole performance. The mass scenes had to be vital and compelling.

Henceforth the role of the *corps de ballet* which, like the chorus in the opera, represented the people on the stage, was to be different. Its dances occupied an important place in the general scheme of the performance. The dances of the principals now seemed to spring from the

corps de ballet dance, and the actions of the two were closely knit. The union of the individual and the mass, the part and the whole, meant that the historical significance of the new era could be expressed through the medium of the dance.

There was a new approach to the choreography of the crowd scene—this was particularly true of the ballets *Red Flower* and *Flames of Paris.* A new age and a new people were now portrayed on the stage, giving the crowd scene a new import. Dancers in such scenes were no longer part of a uniform, drab crowd, devoid of personality, and mechanically repeating the same set of actions. They could appear as human beings, with distinct features of their own. The *corps de ballet* rose to fresh heights. It was like a new sun come into the stage to shine in its full glory. In the new ballets he staged Moiseyev showed the people reborn, aroused and enriched by the Revolution.

In the creation of the new ballet mime was another question demanding attention. Mime is an ancient art, a system of gestures and movements which help to make the meaning of the dance clearer, more visual and comprehensible. But there were dance theoreticians who claimed that mime conflicted with the dance and destroyed the unity of a choreographic production. Igor Moiseyev was firmly convinced that far from conflicting with the dance it was complementary to it and was more direct in appeal than the dance movements themselves.

In his productions Moiseyev, without making it too obtrusive, proved how effective mime can be in choreography. Stripped of superfluous and naturalistic details it blended organically with the dance, helped to develop the action and reveal the meaning behind it. In Moiseyev's choreography of the Tajik dance *Non-Bozy* (cakes), a work dance, it is obvious how organically mime blends with pure dance.

Moiseyev's attitude to the character dance helps us to understand the aesthetic principles of this outstanding Soviet choreographer and justifies the choreographer's right to remould the folk dance. The idiom and imagery of the character dance have much in common with the folk dance. But in artistic essence the two are quite different.

The folk dance, as has already been said, is created by the people. It is the product of life itself, born of the people's activities, reflecting the labour, festivities, rites, history, geographical conditions, and customs and habits of the people. These are part and parcel of the folk dance and are evident in each of the elements which make it up.

In tracing the history of the character dance we find that it takes its origin from the folk dance. Long ago folk dances were brought into the ballet in their original form with all the freshness of folk melodies, rhythms and movements. Gradually, however, they underwent a transformation and were divested of their basic elements until they developed into an independent dance form which we know now as the character dance. The true national features were thus almost completely obliterated and the most important consideration became what would be most effective in a given scene. Later the dances were further changed by each succeeding generation of choreographers and performers who were far less concerned with national character than with choreographic "fireworks." These dances thus got farther and farther away from their original source and lost touch with the national culture from which they had sprung. They became a refined product of the stage. Thus came to birth Hungarian, Spanish and other dances with more of a theatrical than a national tradition behind them. The theatrical tradition of character dances is no less conventional than the tradition of the classical dance.

In Igor Moiseyev's opinion the character dance has to occupy an important place in the ballet but it must be handled with great discretion. Time and again choreographers have made of it a pure play of form. They have used it to re-create scenes from the life of the people but their interpretations were vague and arbitrary. This made the character dance still more remote from its prototype, the folk dance.

It is essential to determine the place of the character dance in choreography and not to put it on a par with the folk dance.

The classical dance has evolved its own artistic and psychological outlook. It has created a conventionalized reality of its own. Its aesthetics, the principle of its movements, their relation to the music, the pat-

tern of the dance—all are governed by a set of specific laws. The character dance, too, has a school of its own, with a national background, with distinct co-relation of movement and music, particular plastic and other effects. And it is to the classical ballet that the character dance belongs. The two indeed should not be separated.

There are some character dances, however, which through the persistent efforts of generations of talented ballet masters, choreographers and dancers have become an improved version of the folk dances from which they stem. The ballet version of the *Krakowiak,* for example, is a more graceful and beautiful dance than that which is danced in Poland today.

There was much food for thought, many lessons to be learned from a study of the history of the character dance. What had turned that dance into a pseudo-folk dance? Was the fact that the choreographer had exercised his right to re-shape the dance entirely to blame? Apparently not. The dance may be re-patterned but not necessarily by destroying the distinct national features. On the contrary, these can be stressed and brought into clearer focus.

Thus the choreographer adapting folk dances has an important lesson to learn from the evolution of the character dance on the stage. What he must always remember is that his approach to this problem should be *creative.* His aim must be to perpetuate genuine historical and ethnographical examples of the folk dance.

The point is, of course, not *what* and *how much* is altered in a folk dance but the *manner* of the alteration. If the dance is adapted without a clear perception of its content and national elements it is bound to degenerate into a pseudo-folk dance, something rather cheap, and merely spectacular. But when the dance is adapted with the right feeling for its national elements the result will be an improved, more artistic work.

Moiseyev is against *literal* transplantation of the folk dance to the stage. A dance that may be of interest to the ethnographer is not always of value to art and a mere "documentation" of it on the stage leaves out the choreographer as a creative artist.

See the handsome, jaunty lads and the pretty girls whirling in the **Polyanka,** a Russian folk dance

The music of **Winds Blow,** Ukrainian folk song, strikes a sad note, and the "girls' exit" in **Vesnyanki,** Ukrainian dance suite which it accompanies, is replete with pensive melancholy

In his work Moiseyev has tried to preserve the basic pattern of the folk dance, its main national form and flavour, and at the same time to give it a new interpretation. He believed that a professional group's rendering of a folk dance ought to be quite different from its performance by the people. To deliberately stress this difference became one of his aesthetic principles. The people dance for their own enjoyment, spontaneously and with practically no line of distinction between performers and onlookers. Professionals dance for the pleasure of their audience, which expects from them a high standard of performance. It goes without saying therefore that a stage rendering of a folk dance must be more colourful, its movements invested with greater plasticity and expressiveness, its meaning more clearly brought out, than when the same dance is danced by the people.

In his quest for new forms Moiseyev tried to take his cue from the great Russian composer Glinka, who said: "The people create music, we artists only arrange it."

The people create a great unfading art, which is an everlasting source of inspiration to the professional.

Moiseyev turned the company he founded into an experimental laboratory for the study of the moulds and patterns of the folk dance and the possibilities they offer in creating and developing the modern ballet.

A thoughtful and creative approach to the dance culture of past and present has enabled Moiseyev to adapt folk dances for the stage with great mastery. And he has brought to the stage the folk dances of scores of different nationalities. Among these are the Russian *Polyanka,* the Adjar *Khorumi,* the Moldavian *Hora* and *Joc,* the Ukrainian *Gopak* and *Metelitsa,* the Byelorussian *Lyavonikha* and *Kryzhachok* and the Gutsul *Arkan.*

Many long-forgotten folk dances have been revived by Moiseyev. He has also created new dances on the basis of national choreographic traditions, thus enriching the folk treasury of the dance. His newly-created *Bulba,* for example, has become a popular folk dance danced and loved by people all over the Soviet country.

AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUE

An audience watching the Moiseyev dancers in the scintillating brilliance of cascade upon cascade of intricate and interwoven movement may admire but will hardly stop to think how that brilliance is achieved, what prodigious work is necessary to attain the technical excellence displayed by the dancers. And who cares about the theoretical research that goes into the production of each dance.

It may seem at first glance that to master the art of the folk dance does not entail any greater effort than to master the art of other dance forms. A polishing and refining of the original dance movements and, of course, a knowledge of the background of each dance is all that it requires. But if we consider the study of the background of each dance alone, the history and folk-lore material, it will be clear what hard work and thought are called for.

The world is as rich in folk dances as it is in nationalities, languages or dialects. And there are numerous variants of one and the same dance. On the banks of one river it is danced in one way, on the banks of another, or under a strange sky, or away in some wood, it changes beyond recognition.

Russia proper is a land of boundless plains and great open spaces with rich fields, rustling woods, the still waters of full majestic rivers, the silver blue of forest lakes. Early Russian history brings to mind the gleaming domes of the first Russian churches, exquisitely fashioned in white stone, Russian nobles living in tile houses, and the rise of the ancient towns of Suzdal, Kolomna and Uglich. The air at that time was already filled with the stirring melodies of Russian folk songs and the people were dancing their beautiful folk dances.

Russian dance culture dates back to the beginnings of Russian civilization. Its traditions have been cherished and kept alive for centuries. It

has influenced the dances of its neighbours, and in its turn has been influenced by them.

Firm and long-standing blood ties exist between Russia and the Ukraine. And Russian and Ukrainian dances have many features in common. As to the difference between the two, it is more in the manner of dancing than in the character of the dance. Russians and Ukrainians also have many similar melodies. Here, too, the difference is in the manner of singing.

However, in speaking of Ukrainian folk dances and Ukrainian music, it must be pointed out that both have many highly distinctive elements. These are particularly apparent in the choreographic ornament, in the emotional expressiveness, and the plastic style. Ukrainian dances are full of flash and fire, of impish humour and light irony.

In Slav dances the most common movement is the *Veryovochka* which no two Slav peoples dance alike. Russians dance it with a slow ease, the Ukrainians in staccato manner with a great deal of leaping. It is typical of the Russians to develop this movement, enhance the rhythm and coordinate it with arm movements.

Sunny, bountiful Moldavia, with its golden fields of corn and wheat, its rosy apples, and rich vineyards, is the home of the fiery, passionate dance. Work in the fields, the harvest celebrations, exultation at the lavish gifts of nature, have been the varying motifs of Moldavian dances since early times. But there are also Moldavian dances performed to the stirring music of the national instruments, such as the *doina*, flowing with a smooth sweet languor. In them we find oriental influences (Moldavia was under Turkish rule until 1812 when it was liberated by Russia). A close study of Moldavian dances will also reveal in them an intricate, strange blending of Russian, Ukrainian and Bulgarian musical features. As to the dashing male dances, here there is a striking resemblance to Hungarian and Rumanian dances.

However, apart from these various influences, each people has in the course of centuries created its own distinct and original choreography.

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Many dances performed by the Moiseyev company are of very ancient origin. In the course of their long life they underwent great changes, in many instances acquiring a new emotional colouring and new movements. When Igor Moiseyev sets to work on such dances he studies their evolution, seeking to divest them of alien and extraneous features and never mixing movements of different national schools in the same dance. A thorough knowledge of the historical background of each dance has helped Igor Moiseyev to produce it on the stage in its most significant elements, those in which the national spirit is best expressed. These elements had not only to be understood in the historical sense, but felt and visualized choreographically.

A wide knowledge in all spheres of the folk dance has helped to make the Moiseyev company the significant dance group it is today. It has taken long years of persistent effort to acquire it.

Another field which the performer of folk dances must master is character representation. When he puts on the costume of the character he depicts he must feel absolutely "at home" in it. Apart from this he must be able to catch everything in a piece of folk music, in its rhythm and melody that will reveal to him the spirit of the nationality whose dance he performs.

Costumes with their striking colour schemes and ornaments are a study all in themselves, and also require the attention of the dancer. So are the applied arts—ceramics, toys, ornamental designs. Then of course there are the labour and ways of life of a people. Through studying and working on the folk dance the dancer becomes the possessor of a veritable treasure store of knowledge. The spectator can see and appreciate only the result of the dancer's great effort—the performance and the artistic interpretation of the dance itself.

It is worth noting that for all the variety of its rich repertoire, the dances performed by the Moiseyev company have certain common features. This comes of the company's broad world-outlook and ability to find and bring out not only national features but common human traits possessed by all people. These are a joy of living, industry, a love of gaiety and a sense of humour, and a wholesome morality. In his dances

Ukrainians love their tempestuous, dashing **Gopak**. Anatoly Berzov is shown performing one of the intricate steps of this dance

The "Finale" in **Vesnyanki** is a dance of youth and spring. An old man as he watches the young people also breaks into dance

Moiseyev tries to make the national traits stand out against the background of these general features common to all nationalities. And this helps to bring out even more vividly the peculiar national flavour of each dance.

The national flavour—there is nothing elusive or mysterious about it. It becomes quite a tangible thing, for example, when two dances of two different nationalities, which are similar in content and emotional colouring, are compared. How differently the company dances them. Let us take one of the comic dances of the Kazan Tatars. The girls' light, flowing movements seem to bring a frolicsome wind to the stage. Graceful motions of the arms and the manipulation of gauze ribbons give the impression of flying birds. A light subtle humour pervades the whole scene. The Byelorussians have a similar dance called *Yurochka.* Like the Tatar dance, it gives an impression of sparkling, sprightly playfulness. It is also built around a comic scene in which a conceited lad who is taught a lesson by the girls is held up to ridicule with real humour.

Typical national traits in a dance are reproduced with great authenticity by the members of the Moiseyev company. A striking example is their rendering of the picturesque folk dances of the nationalities of the Caucasus and Central Asia. Here the national flavour manifests itself very strongly in the manner of execution.

Caucasian and Transcaucasian dances are extremely plastic. In them intricate steps are organically combined with gestures and arm and trunk movements. The life led by these southern peoples has left its imprint on their dances. Such occupations as hunting and the tending of flocks on the mountain slopes, the climbing of mountains, the habit of wearing soft-soled shoes, have made the movements of these people nimble and supple. As a rule the tempo of their dances is swift, and the choreographic and rhythmic pattern extremely rich and original, sometimes rendered by foot and arm movements with the trunk remaining immobile. In the Caucasus and Transcaucasus there is a sharp distinction between the male and the female dance. This may be explained by the position of the Caucasian woman in the home and in the com-

munity, where in the past she led a segregated life and enjoyed few rights.

The dances of the various nationalities inhabiting the Caucasus are very much alike. Hence we speak of the Caucasian dance culture. At the same time the dances of each of the Caucasian nationalities have their own distinctive features. This is particularly true of the Armenian dances, which have been influenced by the Turks. The common features, however, predominate. They are virility, a feathery lightness, agility, recklessness, and with it all, a deep chivalry in the male dances.

The Caucasian dances seem to have grown out of the wild ruggedness of the ancient Caucasian mountains and the soft languor of the sultry valleys. These contrasts in nature are harmoniously blended in the dances of the Caucasus. The Caucasian nationalities have kept alive in their midst very many ancient folk dances. Among them is the Georgian *Kartuli*, a touching romantic dance with beautiful flowing movements, performed by two young lovers, and the graceful *Lekuri*, a heroic Guri dance popular in Svanetia, *Perkhuli*, a choral round dance, the Ossetian *Simd*, the *Lezginka* from Daghestan and many other Azerbaijan and Armenian dances. All these dances give a surprising insight into the character and life of the Caucasian nationalities, from their early history to our own times.

Khorumi, an austere and stirring dance of the Adjar people, is one of the most popular dances in the Caucasus. It brings to the stage the life and strife of a valiant, freedom-loving mountain people, braving dangers, despising death and ready to fight to the last for their liberty. For all their sternness these people can be gentle when, for example, they carry a fallen comrade from the field of battle. With few but forceful movements the dance reveals the main characteristics of this highland people. Though staged by Moiseyev back in 1937, to this day it remains in the repertoire and grips the onlooker by virtue of the tragic truth which is its essence.

Moiseyev did nothing in the way of fundamentally remoulding this dance, yet he invested the movements with great dramatic force. Nor did he in any way conventionalize the forms.

In the opening movements of the dance the atmosphere is charged with watchfulness and alertness as the highlanders lie in wait for their enemy. Soon the movements grow swift and impetuous as in battle and then spasmodic, as though a wounded mountain eagle were flapping its wings. Apart from its immediate meaning, the dance as a whole conveys very forcefully the national character of the highlanders.

Like most Caucasian dances, Azerbaijan and Armenian folk dances are of very ancient origin. The Azerbaijan dances performed by the Moiseyev group include the graceful *Dyasmaly*, a dance with kerchiefs (performed by a group of women), and such male dances as the exuberant, dashing and gay *Gazakhi.*

The nationalities of Central Asia also boast a very ancient dance culture. Its most notable examples are the dances of the Uzbek and Tajik republics. They are coloured with contrasting moods, the movements now brisk and playful, now slow and grave. The Bukhara, Ferghana and Khoresm dances are very beautiful. Those danced by the mountain Tajiks living in a district bordering on the Pamirs are extremely original in design, reflecting the specific life of the mountain folk and the rugged beauty of the surrounding scenery.

In the dances of Central Asia mime and gestures are the principal means of expression. As a rule these dances are performed to the accompaniment of national instruments such as *gijak, dutar* (string instruments), *nai*, a wooden wind instrument of the flute type, and the invariable *doira* played on all holidays and at tournaments (a large tambourine with little rings or bells). *Non-Bozy* (cakes), a Tajik dance performed by the Moiseyev company, imitates the movements of girls baking cakes. With graceful arm gestures the dancers tell their story. They do it with great vividness and clarity as in most oriental dances. *Dance with Knives* is a Tajik martial dance, which portrays a valiant soldier. The soldier is shown defending himself, then attacking. He is wounded, and mustering all his strength he hurls himself at the foe with fresh fury. Here mime and pure dance are harmoniously combined.

Other Central Asian dances performed by the company are *Charkh-Zanum*, a dance from Bukhara, requiring great technical virtuosity of

arm movements and spinning steps, known as "charkhov," and *Gyulsara,* a female solo dance performed to the accompaniment of the *doira.*

All these dances bring to the stage the blazing colour and exotic charm of the Central Asian republics.

In a few hours a plane takes us from these republics to the North. We go from Samarkand to Riga and are struck by the tremendous difference between these two parts of the Soviet Union. The ways of living, the customs, the clothes worn by the people, the languages they speak and the landscape are in striking contrast.

Samarkand lies in torrid, blazing Asia. Its sky is of the same lustrous blue as the mosaics of its ancient mosques. Its bazaars are heaped with luscious fruit–golden melons, pale green grapes and juicy pomegranates–and display the soft, bright-hued rugs and exquisitely embroidered tapestries for which Asia is famous. Next to the bazaar is a caravanserai. Motor lorries and automobiles are parked not far from the entrance alongside the traditional mule and domestic camel. Smells of spicy, savoury dishes, such as grilled *shashlik* or *pilau* made of fruit, rice and mutton come from the caravanserai, where green tea is being served from huge porcelain pots.

One lands on the Baltic shores with these Central Asian scenes still vivid in one's mind. They contrast so strangely with the pale skies of the Baltic republics where the sunlight is so much softer and less glaring. The sand on the beach is almost white and not as fine as in the brown deserts of Asia, and the pines are so very different from the trees one has seen but a few hours ago. The people, too, are poles apart. How much more staid and deliberate in movement and speech are men and women in the Baltic! The Gothic architecture of Riga is graceful and unpretentious. Here we find an entirely different pattern and rhythm of life.

It is part of the work of the Moiseyev company to capture the peculiar charm of each of these contrasting parts of the country and translate it into the medium of the dance.

The Moiseyev dancers, who have mastered the art of portraying in quick succession people of different nationalities, have learned to do

This conceited fellow cannot make up his mind which of the pretty girls he fancies most. A comical Byelorussian dance called **Yurochka**

There is no harm in teasing a young man too persistent in his attentions.
Boris Berzin in **Yurochka,** comical Byelorussian dance

that. The same evening's programme includes the dances of the Central Asian republics and those of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia or Karelia.

There is great charm and beauty in the northern dances. The Estonian dance *The Fishermen* is very impressive, *Rista Kondra*, a Karelian dance, *Ojalis* (little goat), a Lithuanian folk dance, and many of the Latvian dances are brisk and lively. In the Kalmyk dance *Chicherdik*, the atmosphere is quite different. This dance brings to the stage the breath of the wild steppes and the flash and gallop of horsemen. *Two Wrestling Boys* is a choreographic presentation of a wrestling game popular among the Nanai nationality inhabiting the Far North. It is based on a clever trick which quite mystifies the onlookers. There is no musical accompaniment, yet the scene is tense and dramatic, keeping the audience in great suspense as it watches the wrestlers, wondering who will win—the youngster in the white deerskin, embroidered at the hem with black figures of deer, or the other, in the brightly trimmed reddish-brown coat. The little fellow in the brown coat, tries hard to trip his partner and bring him down. The spectators are delighted with the fun. But he doesn't succeed, both fall and both rise at the same time. There is much excitement among the audience when the wrestlers get right to the edge of the stage and look as though they are ready to topple over at any moment. With a sudden movement the fellow in the white coat lifts his opponent into the air. One pair of boots is tossed away and the surprised onlookers see that there was only one performer on the stage all the time. This act requires great acrobatic skill and ingenuity.

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Outstanding achievements in art are the result of great effort and a correct understanding of aesthetic problems and principles.

Thus years of study and hard work in mastering and arranging folk dances enabled the Moiseyev dancers to tackle problems which formerly seemed almost beyond their reach. This made the company feel that it was on firm ground both artistically and technically. And it gave proof of this in the new programme it presented in 1945 devoted to Slav folk dances. In the course of a single evening audiences were able to see the

folk dances of the Russians, the Serbs, the people of Montenegro and Macedonia, the Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Poles, Czechs, Slovaks.

There is a certain similarity about these dances. Yet they could not be successfully staged without an understanding of the subtle differences between them.

Free and flowing movements, melodious music, graceful forms, a great variety of figures, a soft expressiveness and a combination of gentleness and force are characteristic of Slav dances. All these qualities were well brought out in the company's interpretation of these dances. In the languorous music of the Macedonian women's dance one felt the nearness of the East. The Polish suite consisted of the *Trojak, Krakowiak* and *Mazurka,* in which the grace and fanciful rhythm of the Polish dances were admirably conveyed. Other numbers were Czech and Slovak dances and the charming Gutsul shepherd dance, *Arkan,* presenting a little scene in the mountains.

In its programmes the ensemble has striven to combine the national with the international. One of its crowning achievements in this respect was the *Peace and Friendship* programme, first presented in 1952. It shows the dancers' ability to understand the psychology of people of different nationalities and to give their audiences an insight into their thoughts. Good make-up and the effective costumes designed by N. Lakov, the company's scenic artist, are important in helping the dancers *live* their characters on the stage.

Choreographers and composers of various nationalities helped the company to stage the dances on this programme. Several choreographers arrived from Bulgaria to assist with the choreography and arrangement of the Bulgarian suite. D. Petkov, a Bulgarian composer, wrote the music for this number. Korean ballerina An-Son-Hi was responsible for the Korean shepherd dance, and the Czech choreographer Libu Hinková for the Slovak dance. The music for the Albanian dance *Zergan* was written by T. Daya, an Albanian, and its choreographer was G. Perkun; Miklos Rábai, Hungarian choreographer and leader of the State National Ensemble, staged *Pontozoó,* the Hungarian dance.

The *Peace and Friendship* programme opened with the Bulgarian suite

made up of a number of dances for men and women (*Glavinishko, Iglika, Novo-Zagorsko, Chapraz* and others). It was followed by the Czech, Rumanian and Slovak dances *Obkračak, Furiant* and *Rajdovačka.* Audiences were particularly impressed by the Korean dances, the ancient Chinese mime *Sanchakou* and *Dance with Ribbons,* the Mongolian horsemen's dance, the Polish *Kujawiak* and *Oberek,* and the German *Waltz.*

Korean and Chinese dances, which were well represented in this programme, deserve special mention.

A deeply stirring number is the Chinese *Dance with Drums,* which strikes a lofty and heroic note. It opens with a roll of huge kettle-drums. Ranks of stalwart young men in old Chinese costumes with little bells dangling at the ankles fill the stage. They carry drums and beat them in time with their dance. Girls appear holding gleaming discs high overhead. The dance is brought to a climax with the loud clanging of the discs and the rolling of the drums, symbolizing the powerful forces of a free and triumphant people.

Sanchakou (meaning "At a crossing") is an old Chinese mime performed to the accompaniment of traditional Chinese percussion instruments. The action is supposed to take place in a completely darkened room. The dancers represent a young Chinese soldier, an inn-keeper and General Chiao-chien of the Sun dynasty, and they delight audiences with their skilful miming and acrobatics. Much depends here on split-second timing.

Virtuosity and beauty make for the success of the Chinese *Dance with Ribbons.* Very colourful, it is built around a continual play of silk ribbons, which create the illusion of flaming tongues of fire.

When the Moiseyev company was on tour in China in 1954, the Chinese press pointed out that the Russian dancers had been very successful in capturing the spirit and particular grace of the Chinese dances.

Korea, too, with its ancient dance culture, had much to offer to the company. Several Korean dances were chosen, of such loveliness that they seemed to incarnate the beauty of this "Land of Morning Freshness." Among them was a shepherd dance in which mime and dance movements combined to produce a scene of winning humour, and the old

Korean *Dance with Swords* gives an impression of sternness and courage. Its colourful costumes and arresting pattern are particularly interesting.

The Moiseyev company has not been marking time as an artistic group. Apart from everything else, its numerous tours have contributed much to its artistic advancement. They have given the company an opportunity to study first-hand new folk dances as well as the way of living, costumes, and general background of the nationality to which they belong. Thus the company has been able to add more dances to its repertoire.

In summing up the career of the Moiseyev company it is quite clear that it has been very successful in bringing the folk dances of many nationalities to the stage, in adapting them, and in creating new dances on the basis of a study of dance folk-lore.

The creating of new dances is an aspect of choreographic work which may be termed as "artistic invention."

* * *

Artistic invention is something that does not exist in reality yet is not fantasy. Whereas fantasy is the fruit of the free play of imagination with no bearing on real life, invention is rooted in life. It seeks to amend and extend what is suggested by life, to envisage and create something new out of that which already exists.

What concrete form does "artistic invention" take in the work of the Moiseyev company?

There is an old folk song in Byelorussia about the *bulba*, the potato, the most popular vegetable in the country. This rather simple song provided a subject for a new dance. An arrangement of the song by the company's composer provided the music, and the pattern of the dance was based upon the traditional movements of Byelorussian folk dances.

Bulba is a work dance in which the movements of sowing and lifting potatoes are imitated. The movements, of course, have been conventionalized. They resemble in a remote way the Byelorussian national style of ornamentation. The end of this newly-created dance is very effective:

Bulba—girls' gay harvest festival Byelorussian dance

This is an Azerbaijanian dance called **Dyasmaly** with Nina Kuznetsova (centre) as soloist. The movements of these dancers are fluent and graceful with the floating handkerchiefs above their heads giving the impression of soaring birds

Khorumi—an impressive warlike dance

the girls get into a formation representing a huge sack of potatoes, a symbol of the rich yield, and one of them drags the "sack" off the stage.

Bulba, which is now danced all over the Soviet Union as well as other countries, is a typical product of "artistic invention."

Other striking examples are the "Ukrainian" and "Moldavian" suites.

Ukrainian and Moldavian dances are as unlike each other as the brightly coloured Ukrainian embroidery is unlike the national Moldavian decoration. The art of each nationality has great individual charm. And the Moiseyev dancers have captured this charm and conveyed it in their performance of the dances that make up the two suites.

There is a picturesque beauty in the pattern of the *Moldavian Suite.* In this, both the choreographer and dancers sought to re-create the colour schemes of Moldavian folk choreography. In *Hora,* the first part of the suite, music and dance are so blended with each other that the dance is music itself and the music is as flowing and expressive as the dance.

The conception and execution of the suite, slow and smooth, give great aesthetic pleasure. The pattern of the dance is simple but beautiful and the movements flow with perfect harmony. The transitions from the pensive *Hora* to the *Ciocîrlie* and later to the fiery *Joc* bear the hallmark of the choreographer's skill. Moiseyev's new interpretation of these dances makes them highly successful numbers. In them we find all the movements of the folk dance preserved but with a fresh interpretation of the content, in which the national character is brought out in its full vigour. The joy of unfettered labour and the creative powers of the people are well expressed.

In the Ukrainian suite the subject-matter is more clearly defined. The dance is built around the story of two lovers separated by the war. But it is more than just that story. It is a hymn to love, beauty and youth, and personal motifs are interwoven with the fate of the people as a whole. The story itself revolves around Galina, a young Ukrainian girl who sees her sweetheart off to war and waits for his return with anxiety and hope in her heart. Oksana, her friend, tries to comfort her. Then come the joyful tidings that her sweetheart is on his way home. Galina and her friends dance the gay *Gopak.* Taken as a whole the dance is

symbolic of the sentiments and mood of the Ukrainian people in the trying days of the war. The girl's sorrow at being separated from her beloved is really part of the great sorrow of a people whose native land is trampled underfoot by the nazi invaders. The dance ends in the return of the beloved and the Ukraine triumphantly cleared of the invaders.

In the musical prelude there is a suggestion of the main themes of the suite: the pensive *Viyut Vitry* melody followed by the sprightly *Selezen.* From these melodies the basic pattern of the dance develops—slow, graceful round dances, romantic solos, and gay, temperamental mass dances.

One of the last scenes in the suite strikes a high and triumphant note. It is called *There Stands a High Mountain*; in it heroes back home from the war meet. It ushers in the finale, which consists of impressive mass scenes. There are very difficult steps in it which require great virtuosity and they are well integrated with the typical Ukrainian dance movements. Effective costumes designed by B. Matrunin, a prominent artist, add to the brilliance and sparkle of this dance.

A glowing optimism pervades the whole suite, with the stormy rejoicing of a victorious people brought to a climax in the finale. Realistic, and invested with a deep sincerity of thought and feeling, this suite is extremely moving.

Russian folk dances occupy a place of primary importance among the dances of the many nationalities inhabiting the U.S.S.R. To bring them to the stage, however, is a very complicated matter.

They exist in their original form in rural areas far from large towns. And in each locality they are danced in a different way. All this makes it difficult to establish the common and typical national features of the original dance, which must be incorporated into a stage version.

Like Russian folk songs, Russian dances reveal the typical national qualities—great-heartedness, daring, courage and a love of romance.

There are a number of dance groups in the Soviet Union performing Russian folk dances and many of them have specialized in the dances of a particular locality.

In the northern parts of the country, very old examples of Russian folk dances have been preserved to this day. A dance group attached to

the Northern Choir, organized in Arkhangelsk, collects, studies and performs these dances. A song and dance ensemble in the Urals presents Ural variants of Russian folk dances. Dancers associated with the Pyatnitsky Choir perform Russian dances popular in all parts of the country. Russian female round dances are presented by the Beryozka Company, whose performances are graceful and moving. This company has now been specializing for many years in Russian folk dances for women. The Voronezh and Omsk Choirs and the world-famed Soviet Army Song and Dance Ensemble have also given much time and attention to Russian folk dances.

The Moiseyev company, however, has been particularly zealous in studying and staging Russian folk dances. It has presented them in a great number of variants and interpretations, which, for all their differences, have the same basic pattern.

Russian folk songs were for a long time neglected by Russian composers. Glinka and Chaikovsky, however, made them known to the world in their works. Russian *bylinas*, folk tales, popular sayings and proverbs found their way into the works of Pushkin, Griboyedov, Nekrasov, Saltykov-Shchedrin and Gorky. Russian folk-lore was collected and studied by scholars and music lovers, best known among whom are Kirsha Danilov, Buslayev, Dal, Afanasyev, Gilferding, and the Sokolov brothers. But no one seemed very interested in collecting and studying Russian folk dances.

The Moiseyev company set itself the task not only of collecting and studying the gems of Russian folk dancing, but also of continuing and developing the best traditions of the Russian folk dance, and bringing out its most characteristic and significant features.

When working on old variants of Russian folk dances, the company does not seek to restore obsolete forms and produce museum pieces. It tries to grasp the essence of the dance, its flavour and idiom, to stress what is most important without, however, destroying its basic pattern.

As a result the company has given fresh vitality and new life to numerous Russian folk dances and has created splendid stage versions of them. These dances are widely represented in its repertoire. The *Russian Suite*, for example, consists of five Russian dances, and the *Winter and*

Summer Suite of eight. Another Russian folk dance number on the programme is *Mayovka.* It is made up of four Russian dances, among them *Davidkovskaya Quadrille* which takes its name from Davidkovko village, Yaroslav Region, where it is danced.

The *Russian Suite* is so arranged as to bring out very vividly the beauty of the national character. It opens with the pensive, slow melody of a Russian folk song. Girls come slowly gliding across the stage in old Russian costumes and headdresses with flowing ribbons. The first part of the suite, called *Maidens' Entrance,* is danced with the quiet dignity extolled by Nekrasov in his poems about Russian women. And like the poems of that great poet, the *Russian Suite* is pervaded with genuine national spirit devoid of superficial imitation or stylization. From a majestic gliding the movements develop into a round dance. The movements of both men and women have that typical Russian stateliness sung of so often in the folk songs.

Like those of most Slavic peoples, the choreographic forms of the Russians tend toward the round dance with round turns and movements in a ring. In this suite a new tune steals into the melody of the round dance. It is the somewhat more lively *Korobochka* and the dance changes from the quiet dignity of the opening movements to brisker steps gaining in tempo in *Travushka.* As before, the dancers "come out" in turn. The movements are still gliding steps in line but there is much more fire and gaiety in them. A lad and six girls who take part in this dance symbolize youth and joy and bring to their movements and turns a rare beauty.

The suite ends with a male dance and the finale pervaded with a devil-may-care spirit which is characteristic of many Russian folk dances. With perfect harmony the dance and the music reveal the national character particularly as they change from a gentle pensiveness to an effervescent gaiety.

Polyanka and *Moscow Country Lyrics* form part of the programme called *Folk Dances of the U.S.S.R. Polyanka,* bubbling over with rushing, eddying gaiety, is a symphony of youth and colour. It is performed

This is the fiery Daghestan **Lezginka,** dance of the fleet Djigits. It is masterfully performed by Alexander Madikyants, Ilya Izrailov and Lev Golovanov

The charm of this Tajik dance with **doira** (national Tajik instrument) is conveyed with captivating grace by Vivian Pak and Anatoly Fyodorov

by six couples but is so vibrant and dynamic that the whole stage seems to be one blazing whirl of dance.

In *Moscow Country Lyrics* the performers show themselves to be talented actors as well as dancers. Here pure dance is so well combined with mime that one does not realize, in the first part particularly, that there is hardly any dancing at all. Each movement and gesture is invested with the quiet grace typical of the Russian dance which makes the change from mime to dance easy and natural.

The Moiseyev company has devoted much thought and energy to evolving a new, modern style of performing Russian folk dances, a style that would enable the dancers to portray with deeper insight the feelings and emotions of the Russian people. This new style is apparent in the *Russian Suite* with its many swiftly changing moods. It has a graceful women's dance, austere, chaste and unhurried, and punctuated with low ceremonial bows. Then there is the old choral dance, giving an impression of breadth and majesty. *Korobochka* is very emotional, tender and sad. The playful *Travushka* is full of good-natured little tricks. And finally there is the male dance with its dash, vigour and sparkle. Despite the contrasting emotional tones and moods all the dances have the same imagery and show different sides of the Russian national character.

The very pattern of the Russian folk dance is such that the main emphasis is on human beings and their wealth of emotions and feelings.

It is a dance of characters more than anything else, developing against the background of traditional "coming out" movements and the movements of the ancient choral dance that is so popular in Russia to this day.

Perhaps no less popular than the old choral round dances are the dashing men's dances. In them the courage, fire and chivalry of Russian manhood are brought out. The women's dances are slow and gliding, or of an intricate design requiring great skill in performance, but there is always a modest dignity about them.

In rendering Russian dances, the Moiseyev company seeks first and foremost to understand and to bring out the essential meaning of the dance. Perhaps it was the experience gained in creating stage versions

of Russian folk dances that made Moiseyev undertake the presentation of subject dances which at times developed into a finished one-act choreographic play.

BLAZING NEW TRAILS

Expressive as folk dancing is, when the company set out to stage dance numbers based on episodes from national history or contemporary life, it had to search for new forms while keeping to the folk idiom as its basic pattern.

The company's search for new forms went hand-in-hand with its effort to create programme and subject dances.

There were elements of subject choreography in the *Moldavian Suite,* in a number of dances such as the Byelorussian *Yurochka,* the Adjar *Khorumi.* But they were no more than elements. Here the folk dance was pre-eminent, it was merely linked together by subject motifs.

A programme choreography based on historical or modern themes required a different approach. And a new type of dance—the choreographic piece or suite dealing with concrete events taken from real life—emerged. Examples of this new type of dance are the cycle entitled *Pictures of the Past,* a Russian suite called *Seasons of the Year,* the Ukrainian suite *Vesnyanki,* a cycle of dances under the heading of *Soviet Scenes, Tsam,* a dance based on a Mongolian fairy-tale, *Football,* a humorous choreographic scene, and *Partisans,* masterpiece of folk choreography, a dance poem of stirring, patriotic sentiment.

A gem of the company's repertoire, and one of Moiseyev's greatest successes in the field of choreography, *Partisans,* is a well-knit story translated into the medium of the dance. It is about the life, struggles and dreams of the "people's avengers" as the partisans were often called. In the *Partisans* elements of the folk dance are cleverly used and faith-

fully rendered. But one feels that the dance follows the principles of a new genre. The folk dance elements are subordinated to the main idea, which is to show people of different nationalities united by a common cause into partisan detachments.

Concrete depiction of action and the realistic handling of the composition of the dance made it possible to show different sides of the life of partisan detachments, such as a crossing on horseback, an encounter when out reconnoitring, a bivouac. New colours were necessary to paint the characters of the heroes, to show them as they were in life, simple people turned heroes in whom grim courage was combined with a deep humanity.

Partisans is an interesting example of Moiseyev's choreographic skill. He found the forms he needed in a happy synthesis of dance and mime. In this respect the episode of the crossing is superb. Here a complete illusion of horsemen riding, falling in and out of the ranks, chatting with each other, is created. One lights a cigarette, another reads a letter from home, still another dozes in his saddle. The faces of the men are grave. Thus the pattern of the dance and the way the dancers are dressed give the impression of mounted men though there is not a horse on the stage. The new movements introduced by the choreographer in this scene suggest lines of innovation now pursued in Soviet realistic ballet.

Choreographic scenes of this type could not but affect the very nature of the folk dance, lending it greater veracity, force of appeal and making depiction of reality more concrete. These new qualities are quite apparent in *Winter* and *Summer* dances, from *Seasons of the Year,* a suite based on the traditional Russian folk idiom.

Winter depicts a merry snow-ball fight. In this dance the illusion is created of the Russian winter, with its frost, heavy fresh-smelling snow and crystal-clear air. *Summer* brings to the stage the fragrance of the fertile soil, the sun's radiance, giving warmth to the fruit-laden trees in the orchards and the wheat swaying in the fields. In this part of the suite there is a wedding scene, which contains a dashing dance performed to the accompaniment of balalaikas. The scene ends with a round dance.

In *Pictures of the Past,* the choreographic pattern is even more con-

crete and lifelike. The scenes in this folk ballet are united not only by a common theme but by the same definite critical attitude that runs through all of them. It is directed against the pre-revolutionary types, now extinct, that have no place in modern life. The criticism is marked by a mild humour and light irony.

Moscow Country Lyrics, is a bit of life vividly translated into dance. Its principal character is a young fop, perhaps a shop-assistant of pre-revolutionary times in a village near Moscow, who courts a simple country girl with the suavity of a city man. The girl puts on airs. A duet follows in which the two play a game at politeness. The cavalier is so assiduous with his bows and flourishes that he almost kicks his lady in the face. But the lady is not put out and continues the dance heel-tapping and eyeing her partner with only a suspicion of coldness.

It is quite clear that this small scene requires more than skilful dancing; it requires good acting. This is one of the new features that Moiseyev brings to the folk dance: he expects his dancers to be splendid actors as well as good dancers. Moiseyev wants the personalities of the characters in the dance forcefully and convincingly drawn. To achieve this he integrates all choreographic means of expression: the dance step and movement, the attitude, the gesture, mime and mimicry.

Personalities have to be clearly delineated in the group dances as well as in the solo numbers. Mass scenes are never colourless when performed by the Moiseyev dancers. Every member of the "crowd" is a distinct character. And out of the many clearly drawn individualities emerges the many-sided yet homogeneous character of the people itself.

Sharp, concrete delineation of character is particularly important in dances dealing with a contemporary subject. The characters we see in them may be people we meet in everyday life, perhaps our own selves. Therefore the least digression from the truth will at once be detected by the audience. At the same time not every aspect of our reality can be translated into the medium of the dance. The heroic, emotional or comic are the most suitable.

Take *Football,* a dance from the suite *Soviet Scenes.* Here the comic element is brought out very effectively. Both footballers and fans are

The picturesque **Horo** from the **Moldavian Suite** is danced to a languorous melody played on the **doira**

Here is the temperamental, impetuous **Moldavanca**

drawn with humour. Exaggeration and burlesque are used in depicting the over-serious referee, the all-too-flustered footballers, the excited fans and the harried goal-keeper. Exaggeration here does not detract from the truth—the lightning speed and agility of the players and the reactions of the spectators are well conveyed. From the gestures and mimicry of the goal-keeper, who plays an important role in the dance, it is easy to imagine what goes on in that part of the field not shown on the stage. There is no ball, yet the dancers simulate football players' tricks and tactics with such skill and veracity that the audience watches the movements of the dance with the interest of fans watching a real football game.

With modern subjects demanding more and more attention the Moiseyev company began to pursue even with greater zeal its search for new forms. These forms had to be more realistic and lifelike and they were to be found by a close scrutiny of life itself and the new elements that had enriched it—in street scenes, in work, in the everyday life of the Soviet people.

Many of the dances on modern subjects staged by the Moiseyev group show that its quest for new, more expressive choreographic media has been successful. And what is more it has achieved a rare harmony of realistic detail and significance of meaning. In this respect *Naval Suite* is a good example.

The suite was staged during the Great Patriotic War when the dancers performed frequently to the forces. The group spent quite a long time in the Far East entertaining the Pacific Fleet. Friendly terms and close contact with the sailors gave the dancers an opportunity to learn much about life aboard a warship and to watch sailors' dances. These impressions later went into the makings of the *Naval Suite.*

One of the dances in this suite portrays a day aboard a warship—showing the sailors clearing and scrubbing the decks, refuelling the engines and having a rest in the evening. The dancers' movements are an excellent imitation of the typical gait, gestures and mannerisms of the sailor. In addition to these external characteristics the fearlessness in battle, zest for life, and sense of humour of the Soviet seamen are very

well conveyed. The sailors' dances are lively, and are full of intricate steps, with the dancers trying to outdo each other in virtuosity. *A Black Sea Sailor's Story*, another dance in the suite, is extremely effective in reproducing the tense atmosphere of a naval battle and a sailor's experiences in it.

* * *

Every dance that goes to make up the extremely rich repertoire of the company bears the hallmark of Moiseyev's creative genius. The dance becomes a sort of short story about the deeds, thoughts and emotions of ordinary people, in which the audience learns something of their temperament, manners and habits. Whatever the dance, Moiseyev always brings to the stage the true image of the people. He uses every means at his disposal—the movements of the dance, the music, costumes, lighting effects. But what he relies on most is the performance of the dancers.

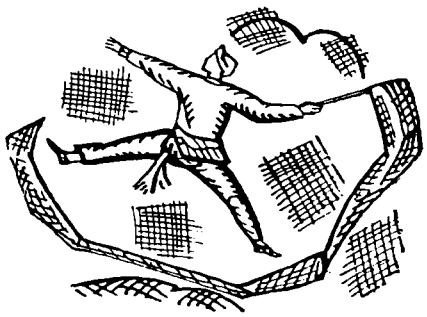
In the pattern of his new dances Moiseyev conveys the content with stark and precise simplicity. He takes great care not to overburden the dance with unimportant details, stressing the essentials only. In the Ukrainian *Gopak*, for example, impetuosity is the principal feature, Moiseyev develops it to the utmost, making it dominate the rhythmic pattern of the dance.

Moiseyev is not averse to resorting to striking effects or to the spectacular. An example of this is the horsemen's scene in *The Partisans* which has already been mentioned. A popular Kazakh game, by the way, suggests the movements which imitate horse-riding. But the effect here is cleverly woven into the whole pattern of the dance, helping the choreographer to bring out the principal meaning.

Effects are never allowed to become important in themselves, however. This is particularly true of the endings in Moiseyev's dances. They are always very striking but are invariably integrated with the whole pattern of the dance and are the logical culmination of the theme. Such, for example, is the tempestuous *Gopak* with which the *Ukrainian Suite* ends and which is expressive of the jubilant spirits of a victorious people.

Moiseyev's innovations in the field of the dance may be said to be actuated by life itself and lend vigour to all that the company produces.

He has given a lifetime's work to profound and critical assimilation of dance folk-lore and is now on the way to creating a modern folk ballet, new in subject and exceedingly vital in form. Blazing new trails—that is wherein his great service to the ballet lies.



THE DANCERS

A versatile and significant repertoire, high aesthetic principles, and the great professional skill of its dancers have won for the Moiseyev company the title of Honoured Dance Ensemble of the U.S.S.R.

Very high standards are set for the dancers. Talent, a striking personality, complete mastery of the dance technique, a highly developed feeling for music and rhythm—all these they have to possess. And they do.

And they work tirelessly to attain still greater perfection in their art.

Excessive adulation which proves so fatal even to the most gifted artists, blunting their sense of modesty, tickling their vanity, and in the end bringing them thorns in place of laurel leaves, has not turned the heads of Moiseyev's dancers. And in this alone there is a guarantee of further success.

Every new programme put on by the company wins more and more admirers for the folk dance. Mass dances and round dances are interspersed with solo numbers. In the group dances the individuality of the dancer is never eclipsed by the mass. On the contrary, the more vividly it is brought out, the more colourful and perfect in form is the dance. Moiseyev gives much thought and attention to assigning parts in group dances, trying to pick dancers to impersonate characters that would give them every opportunity to make the most of their own individual inclinations.

Moiseyev gives every dancer the opportunity to realize his or her own particular gifts to the full. But he also expects each one of them to put in much independent work on the character he is called upon to impersonate. When the dancer feels his character is ready he gives a demonstration performance before the whole company. Then his work is followed up in group rehearsals. In the general work on the dance the main stress is on these group rehearsals. "Rehearsals, rehearsals and more rehearsals" is Moiseyev's motto.

According to Stanislavsky, there are three stages of the actor's individual work. The first stage is when that which is difficult becomes habitual, the second is when the habitual becomes easy, and the third, when that which is easy becomes pleasant. Hence a movement or a gesture that at first seems impossibly difficult to perform is gradually mastered until it is part of the performer. The artist is then no longer aware of technical difficulties and gives himself up entirely to the joy of re-creating life.

Technique "vanishes," only the image moulded with its help remains. That is what is meant by consummate mastery of technique. Technique in a work of art, whether it be a sculpture, a painting or a ballerina's dancing, must never be obtrusive. If it is, the work is not up to standard.

It may be said of the Moiseyev dancers that they possess one of the great secrets of art—an effortless technique.

They know that when the least strain or exertion on the part of the dancer is obvious to the eye it at once mars the plastic beauty and expressiveness of the movement. How then do these dancers achieve such harmony of movement, such dazzling virtuosity as to make it seem that the whole dance is performed in one breath? Talent alone can never do it. It requires endless grind and is the result of coordinated effort, good judgement and high choreographic standards on the part of the whole company.

Patient, systematic work is the company's motto and that means a gradual polishing up of technique and the perfecting of every movement and gesture of the dance—constant hard work, thorough and painstaking to the extreme.

See how beautiful and expressive are the arm movements of the dancers in the Bashkir dance called **Seven Maidens**

Absorbed in the dance, the lads do not notice the disappearance of their partners. **Dance of the Kazan Tatars** performed by Sergei Tsvetkov and Mikhail Alexandrov

Tamara Zeifert and Valentina Dobrina are the playful, mischievous girls in the **Dance of the Kazan Tatars**

There is no such thing as putting off a rehearsal. Wherever the group may be, in Moscow or on tour, travelling by train or aboard ship, rehearsals are held for no less than three hours a day, even if there are matinée and evening performances, and this is only interrupted once a year when the company breaks up for summer holidays. The rest of the year is spent in strenuous work by every one of the group's members, with no exception.

At rehearsals Moiseyev is a hard taskmaster. He has no patience with those who are undisciplined or slow to grasp things, but is always ready to assist and praise those who deserve it. His keen, well-trained eye notices the least unfinished detail, the least imperfection in the dance. Moreover, he is never unreasonable in his demands and is as exacting with regard to himself as to his associates, which is the hallmark of every true artist—in any profession.

Rehearsals are devoted to an endless and careful polishing up of detail and line until every blemish is removed and the pattern of the dance flows with perfect smoothness.

One of Moiseyev's demands is rigid discipline. But it is a discipline based on mutual respect of choreographer and dancers and in artistic matters recognition of the choreographer's authority. In Moiseyev the dancers see a great artist selflessly devoted to the dance, an artist from whom they can learn much, and who has the good of the individual dancers as well as the whole group very much at heart, who is never high-handed or overbearing and whose every action is prompted by the interests of his art.

With such a relationship existing between the group and choreographer, a rehearsal is never just a lesson learned by rote and gone over by the teacher. It is a search for artistic perfection in which Moiseyev helps every dancer attain a creative fulfilment of the best that is in him. An independent approach on the part of the individual dancer is not discouraged if it is in line with the general creative seekings of the group. With dancers who are vain and self-seeking Moiseyev deals severely. He feels responsibility for the group he heads not only as a choreographer tackling all problems of the dance but as an educator and psychol-

ogist as well. And he expects his dancers to be artists with a high sense of duty.

Rehearsals fall in with a strict plan and schedule. They run in cycles of a definite number covering a set period of time and have certain concrete problems to solve. Each rehearsal, too, has a task of its own. This system of rehearsals has been gradually evolved over many years of work and has been brought by Moiseyev to a point of great perfection.

In this system the choreographer is the composer of the dance. It is up to him to work out the pattern of the movements, to analyse and discuss it with the group, and resolve all problems of a general artistic nature before rehearsals begin. Moiseyev's rehearsals are of intense interest to every dancer. He has a number of associate choreographers who help him, particularly in brushing up the details of the dance. They are Lev Golovanov, Tamara Zeifert, Ivan Kartashov, Boris Ramazin and Anna Sitnikova. Each may have his own ideas and approach which Moiseyev respects.

Rehearsals are never mere drudgery to the dancers. They seem to give the members of the company real inspiration of the kind that comes through conscious effort and strenuous thinking. They involve more than the polishing up and perfecting of dance technique to the point of virtuosity; they make the dancer master the art of submerging his own personality in the personality of the character he dances. Technical mastery is combined with a deep understanding of the artistic problems set by each dance. A dancer well aware of all the multiplicity of the problems of his art makes for the success of the performance in no less measure than the highly experienced choreographer.

In the Moiseyev company we find an interesting and brilliant galaxy of dancers, some who had a great deal of dancing experience before they joined the company, others coming from amateur groups and gradually, through work in the group, attaining great professional mastery. There are actually dancers of two different generations working in the company, and they are a homogeneous and well-knit community.

Those who threw in their lot with the company twenty-two years ago were its young trail blazers shouldering many burdens and contending

with great difficulties. To them belongs the credit for the company's first successes. And it was they who helped to steer the company's creative course and evolve its independent style.

Many of those initial members of the group are today at the summit of their fame and in the prime of their creative abilities. Others have taken up choreography and are now working as Igor Moiseyev's associates. Still others have retired on pension.

It is to this first generation that the company is most indebted for the traditions it has been able to create. But traditions are not much good, unless they can be continued, unless they have followers who can advance and develop them. Thus arose within the company the problem of training a new generation of dancers.

Igor Moiseyev was well aware of the importance of this problem.

An affiliated student dance group was organized within the company in 1943. In 1950 a folk dance department was set up in the ballet school of the Bolshoi Theatre, one of the best choreographic schools in the U.S.S.R., headed by graduates of this very school M. Gabovich, People's Artiste of the R.S.F.S.R., and Bocharnikova, ballet dancer. Igor Moiseyev is the principal consultant choreographer at this group.

The company today has many outstanding dancers, most of whom also possess dramatic talent of a high order and have many significant portrayals of characters to their credit.

Tamara Zeifert joined the company when it was first organized after she had graduated from the choreographic school of the Bolshoi Theatre. A splendid dancer of versatile gifts and pleasing appearance, she excels both in romantic and humorous parts. As the salesgirl in *Polish Beauty* and Masha in *Seasons of the Year* she shows both deep insight into the characters she portrays and great technical virtuosity. In the enchanting *Chernomorochka* she combines humour with tenderness and imparts a moving charm to her dancing. Whatever she dances, there is always a scintillating playfulness mingled with a gentle romantic quality in her performance.

Alexandra Loktionova is quite a different type of dancer emotionally. She came to the company with good choreographic training and several

years of work on the stage behind her. Her portrayals are moving, life-like and have great depth. This dancer can impersonate with equal ease and talent quite contrasting types, the serious girl student in *Two May Days*, a shrew in *Trepak* and a vain coquette in *Polish Beauty* as well as the tenderly loving Galina (*Ukrainian Suite*).

Lidia Timofeyeva-Skryabina is at her best in the Russian folk dance. She was a member of the amateur dance group of the Moscow Young Pioneers' Club before she joined the company. Of vivid and scintillating artistic temperament and possessing a highly polished technique, she has been able to invest with sparkle and dash her portrayals of young Russian girls.

Tamara Mozalevskaya-Golovanova is another dancer who came to the group from the Moscow Young Pioneers' Club amateur dance group. Hard work and constant practice have brought her to the ranks of the company's soloists. She has attained such virtuosity that she is one of the company's principal performers of numbers requiring difficult technical feats. In *Partisans*, for example, she achieves a striking effect with a lightning spinning movement performed on flexed knees. Mozalevskaya brings to her dance great dramatic expressiveness, vigour and colour.

Irina Chegodayeva (Koneva) excels in comic parts. Her dancing has a subtle quality about it and her character portrayals are very vivid. Her performance in *Moscow Country Lyrics*, in *Russian Dance*, *Yurochka* and other dances is marked by a pleasing freshness and spontaneity. She is at her best in little scenes from everyday life.

Nina Kuznetsova's portrayals of Russian girls (*Korobochka* from *Russian Suite*, Russian dance in *Seasons of the Year*) are lyrical, tender and chaste, full of the radiant charm and fresh beauty of youth. Nina Kuznetsova, too, had come to the company from the Moscow Young Pioneers' Club amateur dance group. Natural gifts and hard work combined to make her one of the company's leading dancers.

Versatility and talent are possessed to a no less degree by the male dancers of the company.

Vivian Pak and Valentina Zhukova performing an old Korean shepherd dance telling the story of two lovers

Vasily Savin and Lev Golovanov in the Chinese pantomime **Sanchakou**

Chinese **Dance with Drums**—it is the dance of a jubilant and triumphant people

Mongolian Horsemen is a dance of swift and agile motions

Lev Golovanov joined the group in 1943 while still attending the choreographic school of the Bolshoi Theatre, where he graduated with honours in 1945. His striking talent was quick to win him first place among the members of the group. A distinguishing trait of this dancer is a ceaseless search for new solutions to the creative problems of the dance. This is evident in every bit of his work. Golovanov is a splendid actor as well as dancer. He can enter completely into the personality of the character he portrays. And he does it with an enthusiasm which infects all his partners in the dance. Finish and emotional subtlety mark his every performance.

And on top of it all, Lev Golovanov possesses phenomenal technique. The lightning movements, leaps, pirouettes, as well as his every pose and gesture, are spontaneous and colourful with an amazing dignity and an almost musical quality.

The characters he creates are a tribute to his fiery talent and subtle artistry. His fine taste and a good knowledge of the folk dance have qualified Golovanov to undertake the duties of assistant choreographer and to help Moiseyev in organizing the work of the company.

Golovanov may be said to perform all his parts with equal brilliance. In the *Russian Suite* he creates a charming portrait of a jaunty, reckless Russian lad. To his performance of the Daghestan *Lezginka,* Ukrainian dances and the Polish *Mazurka* he brings all the vigour of the national temperament. In the Chinese pantomime *Sanchakou* he conveys very well the spirit of ancient Chinese art.

Two other male dancers, Savin and Noskov, also take part in *Sanchakou.* All three had to put in enormous effort to master the difficult acrobatic feats in which it abounds. When *Sanchakou* was performed in China both the public and the press were high in their praise of the technical skill of the Russian dancers.

Another leading male dancer in the Moiseyev company is Ivan Kartashov. Before he joined the company he used to dance solo parts with the ballet companies of the theatres of the Ukraine and Azerbaijan. He is a dancer of wide range but his temperament is perhaps best suited to oriental dances.

Kartashov's performance in the Tajik *Dance with Knives* is magnificent in its portrayal of a warrior's valour and steadfastness. The passion and determination of a man fighting for his honour are forcefully conveyed in the stark, clear-cut movements of the dance. In the Kalmyk dance *Horse-racing,* the dancer imitates, as it were, an eagle soaring above the wide steppes. Here Kartashov shows himself the supreme virtuoso he is.

In addition, however, Kartashov performs with great excellence the dances of many other nationalities and can draw with great skill characters in scenes from everyday life, as, for example, in the solo part of a show-off in *Collective-Farm Street* or one of the detectives in *Two May Days.* With a long stage career behind him, Kartashov is now doing very well as assistant choreographer as well as a soloist.

Victor Aristov possesses both great talent and temperament. This dancer who back in 1939 worked as an electrician at the Bolshoi Theatre and won his first stage triumphs as an amateur performer had no choreographic training when he joined the company. Determination, hard work and natural gifts helped him to become one of the group's leading performers. A master of dance technique, he is at the same time an imaginative actor, as may be seen from his performance of the waltz in *Sunday,* the jolly workman in *Two May Days,* and the referee in *Football.* He possesses a wide enough range to take in character parts in almost any national dance.

The character role, however, is the particular domain of Valerian Arsenyev. In such dances as *Old Factory Quadrille, Moscow Country Lyrics* and *Polish Beauty,* he comes into his own as a supreme character dancer. His bo'sun in *Naval Suite* possesses a rare expressiveness.

Tankho Izrailov is both an outstanding dancer and choreographer. Oriental dances seem to be his particular speciality. He is responsible for the choreography of several of the company's oriental numbers, among them the Daghestan *Lezginka* and the Azerbaijan *Gazakhi.* Tankho Izrailov is an Honoured Artist of Turkmenia and chief choreographer of the Turkmenian Ensemble of Song and Dance.

Before he joined Moiseyev's company Mikhail Shishkin was a factory worker participating in amateur theatricals. Mikhail Shishkin in-

vests his roles with great ardour and brimming optimism. His interpretations in Russian folk dances are particularly original and stimulating and his portrayals of Russian lads full of charm.

Vasily Savin is another dancer who came to the company from an amateur group. At the time he was an apprentice at a vocational school, hoping to become a cabinet-maker. A serious interest in dancing and his great personal ability brought him to the Moiseyev company. He excels in comic parts. In recent years his solo performances in the Ukrainian *Vesnyanki,* the Chinese *Sanchakou,* and *Partisans* have won him great success. He dances his parts with engaging spirit and dash.

A dancer with interesting ideas, Sergei Tsvetkov has created a number of memorable portraits such as the scout in *Partisans* and the football fan in *Football.* He gives a brilliant performance in the *Two Wrestling Boys.*

Oriental dances have occupied a prominent place in the repertoire of the company ever since its inception. There are two dancers of striking and original talent who have contributed greatly to the success of the oriental numbers. They are Ilya Izrailov and Alexander Madekyants. They have been able to grasp the spirit and essence of these dances and perform them with all the impetuousness, agility and fire that is characteristic of them.

The technical excellence of Boris Ramazin, now assistant choreographer, deserves special mention. For many years this dancer moved the hearts of his audiences in such parts as the cadet in *Polish Beauty,* the mechanic in *Naval Suite,* the lad in *Russian Suite* and particularly in the *Sports Waltz* with Tamara Mozalevskaya as his partner.

There are many talented young dancers who have joined the group quite recently. The future of the group is in their hands. Young dancers have every opportunity to realize their gifts. There is hardly a new number in which their names do not figure prominently. The Hungarian dance *Pontozoó* and the Rumanian *Briul* have brought into the limelight such young dancers as A. Fyodorov, M. Aleksandrov, V. Petrov, V. Baldin and V. Baksheyev.

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Zinaida Mikoyan, a graduate of the choreographic school of the Bolshoi Theatre, is one of the rising stars in the group. She dances with great charm in a Slovak dance and in the dances that go into *Pictures of the Past.* Another young dancer, Vivien Pak, shows the splendid talent she possesses in her performance in the *Mongolian Statuette,* the *Korean Shepherd* dance and the Tajik *Non-Bozy.* Every role she dances is marked by outstanding artistry.

Among the young male dancers, the most promising are I. Filatov, who gives a superb performance in *Horsemen,* a Mongolian dance, and in *Football,* N. Danilov, who brings real fire to the solo part in the Gutsul *Arkan* and who also dances with distinction his parts in *Football* and in *Ukrainian Suite,* and I. Voronkov. The latter strikes a new note in his interpretations in *Krakowiak* and *Joc.*

One must not forget to mention the dancers G. Shlyapnikov, A. Borzov, A. Samsonova, and G. Ukolicheva.

The first prizes for group dancing and five first individual prizes awarded to dancers at the First International Youth Festival in Prague were won by the dancers of the company.

One of the great tasks facing any theatrical group is to achieve a proper combination of the personal aspirations of its members and the general interests of the group. This the Moiseyev company has succeeded in doing. It has also coped with the great problem of fostering a new generation of young dancers as well as giving the dancers of the old generation the possibility of fully realizing their many gifts. In dealing with these problems Moiseyev has proved himself an able and far-seeing organizer and pedagogue.

In the course of the twenty-two years of its existence the company has witnessed many changes within its ranks. Yet the coming and going of dancers has not affected the general manner of execution. There have been no clashes of style, no jarring notes. The traditions established at the beginning continue, expanding in range, growing more flexible, but not changing in essence. And these were new traditions in the staging of folk dances, founded, evolved and kept pure through the untiring efforts of Igor Moiseyev.

Grace and brittleness mark Vivian Pak's performance in the **Mongolian Statuette**

The male dance in the **Bulgarian Suite**— sweeping and impetuous

The girls' dance in the **Bulgarian Suite** bubbles over with unaffected gaiety

The Moiseyev company is a very close-knit group in which dancers with a long career behind them and new budding talents have every possibility to assert themselves artistically. It has no fear for its future for it possesses all that makes for success–talent, vigour, vitality and the great common aim of helping to create the new Soviet art, the art of socialist realism.

MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT

There is an organic harmony of song, dance and music in folk art. In Russian folk songs, dances and music we find a unity of pattern which has been kept alive for centuries. Kazakhstan and other Central Asian republics to this day have minstrels who sing, improvise, play the domra and take part in competitive festivals of folk singing. Music, dance movements and shouts of encouragement are all blended into one in the folk dancing of the nationalities inhabiting the Caucasus.

From its inception Igor Moiseyev's dance company has striven to preserve and develop this characteristic of folk art.

To achieve a perfect partnership of music and dance was one of the difficult problems confronting the group. It was clear to Igor Moiseyev that unless this problem was solved it would stand in the way of the company's progress. However, the choreographer and the composer soon learned to think and create in perfect concord and to grasp not only the general concept of the dance but its various parts and details, the dramatic and choreographic. They were able to make the most of the individual traits of each dancer and the potentialities of the group as a whole. And gradually the musical accompaniment became so expressive, so well integrated with the dance, that to the public the music and the dance became one.

Musical perceptions differ with nationality, as do accents, rhythms and coordination of movement and music. In European countries the music is based on the seven tone scale, in Mongolia on the five tone one. And the Hungarians, like some other nations, have the tradition of syncopation. In some folk dances there is a discrepancy between the musical phrasing and that of the dance.

Hence one of the most important tasks in the study and staging of folk dances was to establish a correct relationship between dance and music in the various national schools of the dance. At the same time the multiplicity of rhythm and manner of coordinating music and movement afforded great opportunities for the further enrichment of all folk dances and for attaining greater skill in performing them.

In dealing with musical problems it had to be borne in mind that the dance is not only a medium for expressing emotions but also a means of reacting to music and coordinating movement with music. Persevering effort and experimentation have helped the Moiseyev company to solve the complicated problems connected with the marriage of music and dance.

* * *

When the dance company was organized in 1937 the musical accompaniment was provided by three accordion players, and later in the summer of 1937 by a domra sextet, with A. Semyonov as its conductor.

But the entire company, Igor Moiseyev, its leader, L. Stepanov, its composer, in charge of the musical section, and the dancers, found this accompaniment unsatisfactory. It was too thin; it lacked colour; it had not the special instruments required for some of the dances.

It was decided to form an orchestra which consisted of a domra sextet, a complete balalaika group, three accordions, a quartet of wood wind instruments (a flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon) and percussion instruments. For the musical accompaniment of the dances of the Caucasus and Central Asia a special quartet was organized with such instruments in it as the *tar, kyamancha, duduki* (the same player doubles on the *zurna*) and the Caucasian tambourine. Some of the dances were accompanied by the full quartet, others by two of its players (for example, the

zurna and tambourine for the *Armenian Suite*), whereas a dance like the *Khorumi* needed only the tambourine. Later the instruments of the quartet were from time to time introduced into the main body of the orchestra. Parts of dances were performed to the accompaniment of the accordion and different groups of instruments of the main body of the orchestra. A skilful varying of musical instruments in the accompaniment has proved very effective and may be regarded as one of the successful methods employed by the company. Some of the numbers were accompanied by the dancers themselves who were able to play the balalaika, accordion, mandolin or guitar. Later such musical "intrusions" into the dance were more widely practised (with orchestra players taking part) and they made for a greater organic unity of dance and music.

The musical accompaniment to the company's first programme, however, despite certain successful innovations, was not up to the choreography at all. This first programme entitled *Folk Dances of the U.S.S.R.* was versatile, vital and forceful in its solutions of many choreographic problems. It needed a musical setting, colourful and convincing, that would do it justice.

The new orchestra was thus not long in existence when it began to undergo a period of experimentation. This was prompted by the need to make the music more significant, to give it a wider range so that it was in a better position to convey the characteristics of the dances of various nationalities.

Hence the music to all the numbers in the first programme was rearranged and adapted to the style, rhythmic pattern and emotional character of the dances. For example, banjolettes temporarily replaced the domras (only to be removed later as they proved too weak in sound), and the orchestra was replenished by psalteries with keyboards, as well as two violins, a cello, two trumpets, a trombone and a tuba.

A perfect harmony of music and dance has been best achieved in such of Moiseyev's productions as *Bulba* (music arranged by L. Stepanov), *Polish Beauty* from *Pictures of the Past* and *Yurochka* (the music of both these dances was arranged by V. Avksentyev), *Polyanka* and *Tatar Girls.*

In the first dance programmes of the company it was customary to include a few musical numbers for the orchestra. The pieces were specially written for the orchestra and were congenial in character with the dance programme. As a rule they were concert overtures or solo numbers played before the second part of the programme began.

Working hard to bring its standards up to those of the dance ensembles, the orchestra systematically rehearsed pieces that were not included in the repertoire, but were important for general musical training and polishing up of technique.

In 1941 the orchestra numbered 33 players, the domra and balalaika group in the lead with 14 persons, a 9-strong wood-wind, four accordionists, four playing bow instruments, one the piano and the psaltery, and one drummer. Apart from the orchestra, the quartet of oriental instruments was still with the company.

At the outset of the war the orchestra was cut to 15 persons. But as early as the beginning of 1943 its number again increased and it was reorganized into a small symphony orchestra with a group of Russian folk instruments and several oriental instruments attached to it. As the dance repertoire gained in scope increasing demands were, of course, made on the music.

Today the musical part of the programme is forceful and compelling. Far from being a mere accompaniment it perfectly expresses the colouring and moods of the dance. An organic integration of movement and music, which is as colourful and versatile as the dances themselves, makes for the consummate artistry of every programme.

The music composed by Avksentyev to the Korean dances with fans and swords and particularly to the *Maid and Shepherd* is very effective. In the latter dance the melody, soft and poetic, brings out its tender charm and is a striking example of the unity of dance and music.

Another successful piece is that written for the *Seasons of the Year Suite*, especially the *Summer* part in which a loving pair dances and the music conveys the ecstasy of the lovers.

There is a moving and gentle quality in the music composed for the Chinese *Dance with Ribbons*. Its rhythm is so featherlight that the

The effective Hungarian **Pantozoo** never fails to delight its spectators (performed by Lev Golovanov and Vyacheslav Baksheyev)

Spontaneity and humour are the outstanding features of **Briul,** a Rumanian dance

movements of the dancers seem to merge with those of the floating ribbons.

The graceful and playful melody of *Chernomorochka,* the passionate tunes of the *Moldovenyaska, Joc* and *Ciocîrlie,* the now pensive, now passionate motifs of Russian and Ukrainian dances have all become very popular. And the melodies of *Yurochka, Bulba,* the dances of the Kazan Tatars and the *Polyanka* are as attractive as the dances themselves. Other striking examples of music that has greatly contributed to the success of the dances are the pieces for the Polish *Mazurka, Mongolian Statuette,* the *Horsemen* and the two Rumanian dances *Mushamaua* and *Briul.*

Musical preludes have been very effective in creating the atmosphere and suggesting the background of the dance. In the *Russian Suite,* for example, the music transports the spectator into the Russian countryside, with its broad expanses, green meadows and valleys and fragrant earth, even before the curtain rises. The overture to the Ukrainian suite *Vesnyanki,* with here and there a note of alarm, sets the emotional key of the dance. *Football* opens with a sports march and the lyrical melody struck up at the beginning of *Moscow Country Lyrics* is effective in introducing the young pair who open the dance. The prelude to *Partisans* suggests very well the atmosphere in which these Soviet patriots lived and fought.

A number of composers, such as S. Galperin, V. Zhmykhov and Y. Avksentyev,* working in close association with Igor Moiseyev, have written many original musical accompaniments to various dances as well as arranged old folk dance music. Whatever they have written the underlying principle has been unity of dance and music. Other Soviet composers like N. Budashkin, A. Tsfasman, and L. Stepanov have also written music for the group.

When a new dance is in the making the composer is in constant at-

* Although Y. Avksentyev has not been directly associated with the group since 1949, he has not ceased to compose music for it and has written the accompaniment to three Korean dances, to a *Finnish Suite,* to the recently produced *Russian Dance* and several others.

tendance at rehearsals. He takes part in its creation, writing the music to suit the style and pattern conceived by the choreographer. Often the composer and choreographer argue over the general idea of the dance as well as the details, and discuss the music.

Samson Semyonovich Galperin, who has been the company's musical director since 1943, and the chief conductor of its orchestra since 1949, has written and arranged much of the music for its dances. A gifted musician, he has striven persistently for higher standards, making strict demands on the orchestra. He has arranged many folk melodies for the orchestra, approaching this work with great care in order to preserve the national elements in the music, while making it more suited to the dance. Samson Galperin wrote the music to the Mongolian dance *Horsemen,* the *Mongolian Statuette,* the Polish *Oberek,* and the Mongolian *Tsam.* The music for such numbers as the Polish *Mazurka,* the German *Waltz,* the Rumanian *Briul* and *Mushamaua* and the Hungarian *Pontozoó* was arranged by him. In collaboration with Y. Avksentyev and V. Zhmykhov, taking folk melodies as a basis, he wrote the music to five dances of the *Russian Suite,* to the *Naval Suite,* to seven dances in the Ukrainian suite *Vesnyanki,* the *Yugoslav Suite, Two May Days* and a number of other items in the repertoire.

Galperin's utter devotion to his work and his deep understanding of music have enabled him to establish and sustain contact between orchestra and dances.

Y. Avksentyev, the company's former musical director and orchestra conductor, is also a splendid musician and composer. It was he who completely rearranged the music for the group's first programme. He also wrote the music for many items on the four programmes that followed, arranging and adapting for the dance the melodies of *Polyanka, Chernomorochka,* the Gutsul dance *Arkan,* the Byelorussian *Kryzhachok* and *Yurochka,* the Azerbaijan *Gazakhi,* the Kazakh *Kokpor,* Moldavian, Lithuanian, and Korean dances and those of many other nationalities. In collaboration with L. Stepanov, who was the company's musical director from 1937 to 1941, he wrote the music for a suite of six Estonian dances.

Much time is devoted by the company's orchestra to noting down and studying folk melodies. Many of the melodies are noted down in out-of-the-way places while the company is on tour in the Soviet Union or abroad. Some are written down when touring groups or individual dancers come to Moscow.

It is particularly difficult to record the music and rhythms of the nationalities of Central Asia as well as Bulgarian and Yugoslav melodies. In these cases the musicians constantly improvise, never playing the same melody twice in the same way. Thus in cases when two or three variants were noted, the most typical was chosen.

In arranging folk melodies the company's composers neither mechanically copied what had been recorded nor relied too much on their imaginative powers. They tried to retain the original harmonic or polyphonic style, to integrate it with new elements and out of it create something new.

When the composer listens to the dance music or song of a particular nationality he tries to catch the essence and colour of the melody and visualize the harmonic and polyphonic potentialities. Later he pays great attention to orchestration and does his best to ensure that the music highlights the figures and movements of the dance.

In their work the company's composers have made skilful and harmonious use of the dramatic element in symphony music, such, for example, as the system of leit-motifs.

They draw boldly and freely from the inexhaustible source of folk melodies. They incorporate into their compositions either whole themes or musical phrases. In doing this they try hard to preserve the flavour of the music, at the same time reading into it the meaning essential for the movements of the dance for which it is written. The most important task of the composer is to make the music perfectly express the content of the dance.

In arranging music there have been failures along with successes. Still the successes have outnumbered the failures. What is important, however, is that in the twenty-two years of its existence the dance company

has been able to considerably enlarge its library of written folk melodies of the many republics of the Soviet Union and almost forty nationalities living in other lands.

COSTUME, ORNAMENT, LIGHTING

Colours can be very expressive. There is a certain tenderness about pink, green conveys the freshness of spring, black strikes a note of tragedy. Costume designers working for the Moiseyev company try to use colour as effectively as possible to bring out more fully the meaning behind the dance and lend greater vividness to its imagery. Other elements important in costume designing are ornament, fabric and trimming. All in their own way help to supply atmosphere.

The company's costume designers, make-up artists, designers of various accoutrements work towards one end—to reveal the content of the dance and express in colour and design the choreographer's idea as forcibly as possible. To be able to do this they must be well versed in folk-lore, must study the style and characters of each dance. Costume designers attend rehearsals and observe movements of the dance to get ideas for costumes. The finished costume must correspond to the choreographic image of the character.

In opera or drama décor supplies atmosphere and sets the emotional tone even before the singers or actors appear on the stage. But dancers who often have to perform on almost bare stages depend very much on costumes and light effects to fulfil that important function.

Costumes reflect the nationality, period and mood of the dance and help to clearly define the character they are designed for. Together with the music they express the emotions, thoughts, melodies and rhythms which make up the dance.

The national costume, like any other form of artistic expression, reflects the national character. But take that national dress away from its natural surroundings and put it on the stage with nothing but the backdrop as its background and one finds that it must be altered, in some cases added to, in others simplified.

Costume and lighting in the dance do not complement décor as in other theatrical arts but form a colour scheme in themselves which assists in heightening the principal idea of the choreographer and the character of the music.

Since the Moiseyev dance company often gives performances in concert halls, in street squares and on large stage platforms with no scenery whatever, it has to rely on costumes for the sole decorative setting.

How are costumes and their various accoutrements designed?

Costume artists actively participate in the preparation of each new programme. Firstly, together with all the members of the company they listen to the music for the dances. Secondly, they are present when an outline of each dance is drawn up. Then they concentrate on their own specific task. This involves the study of ethnographic material, going through books and old illustrations, spending much time in museums and, if necessary, travelling to the birth-place of the dance.

The final drawings for costumes are approved by the choreographer responsible for the dance and by Igor Moiseyev, the leader of the company, but not before they have been discussed by the dancers and assistant choreographers.

The costumes in themselves furnish the decorative background and are so rich in the ethnographic features stressing the character of the dance that absence of décor is in no way a handicap.

Dances with complex choreographic scenes often require at least some elements of décor. An example of this is a scene showing a pre-revolutionary May Day gathering in *Two May Days*. Here we find the bough of a young birch overhanging the stage, some bushes and tree-stumps scattered here and there and a hummock for the speaker to stand on. Streamers, flags, emblems and slogans are carried by the dancers in the Soviet May Day scene.

It goes without saying that costume designers associated with the Moiseyev company must be well versed in the history of national costumes as well as in the history, mode of life and folk art of many nationalities. They must also have wide knowledge in the field of theatrical costumes. Ethnographically correct costumes must be remodelled to suit a particular dance, to fit in with its movements and the choreographer's demands. They must be made to meet stage requirements. Thus light materials are often substituted for heavy ones in order not to handicap the dancer's movements and a too complicated pattern is rendered more simple.

Moreover, it is wrong and impossible to copy the ethnographic costume blindly since the dances staged by the company are not photographic replicas of folk dances. Costumes, whatever their origin, must be effective, colourful and theatrical. And, of course, in designing for the stage, the costume artist has to take many other things into consideration, such as lighting, distance, background, stage space. And by the way, designers working for the Moiseyev company rarely resort to stencil-plates, appliqués, powdering, etc., preferring embroidery and national ornaments copied from old chests, murals and utensils. In remodelling national costumes for the stage, designers must make them harmonize with the character of the dance. Humorous, satirical, romantic, heroic, each type of dance requires a special costume though all may be based on the same national pattern.

Sometimes costumes are designed on more elaborate lines to produce a desired effect. For example in the *Russian Quadrille* skirts were made wider with gathered basques and numerous flounces to give the girls the appearance of flowers. Thus the colour scheme of the costumes, the skirts and men's shirts and scarves, together with the movements of the arms and the whirling group of dancers gave the effect of bouquets of flowers. In the Russian round dance the heavy folds of the girls' tunics and the full sleeves impart a flowing lightness to the dance. This helps to give the impression of garlands, thus fitting in with the basic pattern of the dance.

But it is not always necessary to enhance the costume by bringing

more colour into it and making the design more striking. Sometimes the pattern of the dance calls for the opposite. In their work costume artists associated with the dance company give a great deal of consideration to the intensity of dance movements as well as the "geometrical" pattern of the dance drawn on the stage floor. Costumes must never be too colourful or extravagant when the pattern of the dance is a very complex one. This prompted the costume designer to subdue the colour scheme of the costumes for the *Gutsul Suite*. Here the dominant colour is white with pale embroidery and it makes the pattern of the dance itself stand out very sharply.

In women's costumes the length of the skirts requires special consideration. Shorter skirts stress swiftness of movement, longer ones give it a flowing smoothness. Ukrainian and Moldavian women's costumes have short skirts, which makes it easier for the dancers to perform the energetic leaps and rapid movements typical of the dances of these nationalities. Georgian, Azerbaijan and Armenian women's costumes fall in soft folds down to the very toes, helping to create an effect of continual gliding movement.

When designing costumes for group dances the costume artist is confronted with a number of difficulties. Colour harmony is a problem which if neglected may lead to an unpleasing garishness. Certain rules of harmony have to be observed. A red colour scheme, for example, with the shades running from pink to deep red, gives a certain unity to the dance and makes it stand out from other numbers. Red costumes may be made more effective by trimming in a contrasting cold shade, such as blue or green, or white in the women's costumes and black in the men's.

Stage lighting has also to be considered when working out colour schemes. It must be remembered, for example, that artificial light will make warm tones, such as yellow, orange and red, appear brighter and cold tones–light blue, dark blue and purple–darker. In the daylight quite the contrary is true, cold tones grow brighter and warm ones darker and more intense. In the daytime the difference between cold and warm colours is not so great.

A national costume must be so remodelled for the stage as to fit in perfectly with the choreographer's concept. One and the same national costume, the Russian, for example, will have to be designed differently for the drama, opera or dance.

It is obvious that the role of the artist who designs the costumes, backdrop and sometimes pieces of décor is an extremely important one. In many ways his discretion and talent contribute to the success of the dance. He regards his work a part of one harmonious whole consisting of all the components of the dance, and sees as his main task the faithful embodiment of the choreographer's idea. This is particularly true of such designers as B. Matrunin, N. Lakov and A. Filippov, who is a particularly expert lighting artist.

Matrunin is a scenic designer of note. His first work attracted the attention of Fyodor Chaliapin who pointed him out as "an artist of great promise." Later Matrunin's work caught Stanislavsky's eye and the great producer asked him to do the designs for some of his productions. Afterwards, when Stanislavsky set up an experimental opera studio, he chose Matrunin's sketches from the entries in an artists' contest for the setings for his *Yevgeny Onegin.*

When Moiseyev was working on *The Three Fat Men* for the Bolshoi Theatre he thought that Matrunin with his distinct individuality, his ability to create striking effects and set the emotional tone, and above all his ingenious tackling of artistic problems, was the man to do the décor for this ballet. And indeed Matrunin's designs showed great subtlety and the sensitive imagination that the scenery for a ballet based on a fairy-tale required.

In 1938 Matrunin became permanently associated with the company as its chief designer. From then until 1946 he designed the costumes for all its programmes. Possessing a wide knowledge of the history of world culture and a strong feeling for nature, Matrunin produced costume drawings which perfectly harmonized with the music and dance and were in themselves splendid examples of art.

Lakov has been the principal designer working for the company since 1948. He attended the Stroganov art school, where he made a serious

Zerchan, an Albanian dance. It brings to the stage the spirit of this mountainous land and its proud and brave people

Oberek, a very musical Polish dance

German Waltz—it breathes of the youth of the new democratic republic and the joy of peaceful endeavour

A tableau from the **Czech Suite,** vibrant with bright, festive colours

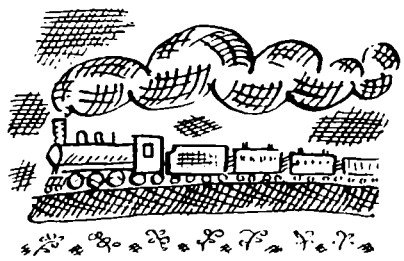
This is a jocular Slovak dance

study of decorative painting, ornamental design, sculpture and the graphic arts.

He has had the job of designing the costumes for a number of national dance festivals and has made a thorough study of the dances and costumes of the nationalities of the U.S.S.R. His wide theoretical knowledge, his extensive experience and great imaginative powers have made him a very successful costume artist. His designs for the costumes of many dances, particularly those for such items as *Two May Days, Winter and Summer* and *Peace and Friendship*, have won him wide appreciation.

Filippov is the company's lighting artist and a past master in his field. Since 1939 he has had charge of the lighting effects of every single one of the company's programmes. His skilful manipulation of lighting has helped to show to the greatest advantage both the costumes and the dancers' movements.

It is interesting to note that in their designs the costume artists working for the company follow the traditions of Russian painting. At the same time their costumes are true to period, striking in style and theatrically very effective.



TOURING SOVIET TOWNS

It is a long-established tradition for theatrical companies and actors to travel. The strolling player is a common figure in history. He was the most democratic performer of his time, bringing his art to the simple people, *Petrushka* in Russia, *Pulccinello* in Italy and *Punch* in England were popular with the people and spoke the same language as the people.

Many of the world's famous theatre groups and actors are known to have spent a good deal of their time away from their homes travelling in their own land or abroad. Most great artists travel extensively,

rarely for pleasure, but because their art demands larger audiences and broader horizons.

The Moiseyev dance company began touring the country soon after it was organized. Its first programme was a tremendous success. It was presented at the Green Theatre, a large open-air theatre in the Gorky Park of Culture and Rest in Moscow. Soon other theatres in the country flung their doors open to the company. The Moiseyev dancers took part in the Fifth National Theatre Festival and various other festivals, and were a great success everywhere. After winning the hearts of the Moscow public, noted for its keen appreciation of art, the company set out to capture audiences in other parts of the land.

There are innumerable towns and cities in the U.S.S.R. In all these places people love are the theatre and dancing. In some there are strong theatrical traditions, going back for generations. In the new young towns, still smelling of fresh cement, brick and paint, love for the theatre is young but warm–born with the first amateur shows–and has come to stay. Wherever the Moiseyev dancers have appeared they have had a warm and enthusiastic reception, perhaps most warm from the young builders of new towns. The hearts of their audiences have gone out with gratitude to the dancers who have brought them an art, real, throbbing and full of zest.

The company has a bulky folder of press clippings collected over the last twenyt-two years.

Here are some excerpts from them:

"Optimism, richness of spirit and deep humanity pervade every dance," writes the *Pravda.*

"Every performance given by the company is a festival in itself, a pageant of beauty, captivating and full of gaiety. The bold, sweeping pattern of movement, the flamboyant colour, fanciful interweaving of plastic motifs–all this rejoices the heart." (*Literaturnaya Gazeta,* Moscow.)

"A packed house, the audience greeting with enthusiasm all the numbers–surely that is the highest tribute to the dancers of this talented company." (*The Lvov Pravda.*)

"Amazingly high standards of technical perfection have been attained by the dancers. The company's performances in Riga may be regarded as an important event in the cultural life of Latvia." (*Soviet Latvia,* Riga.)

"It is hard to say which of the dances were the most striking. Each was perfect in its own way." (*Soviet Estonia.*)

"The great idea of friendship among all Soviet nationalities has found artistic embodiment in the work of the company." (*Soviet Lithuania.*)

In the *Tajikistan Communist* we read: "This company rightly deserves a leading place among the dance ensembles of the Soviet Union. It has good teamwork and a brilliant finish. Audiences delight in the rich colours, the plastic movement, the grace and swift tempo of the dancing."

"The Ensemble of Folk Dances of the U.S.S.R. upholds and perpetuates the finest traditions of Russian choreographic art," writes Tashkent's leading newspaper.

Most of these clippings are old history now. However, they help to shed light on the career of this important dance company. From them we learn what great success their tour of the Soviet Union brought the dancers, their serious and persevering efforts being rewarded by warm smiles, laughter and stormy applause from thousands of spectators.

Let us go back twenty-two years. When the company started on its first tour of the U.S.S.R. it began with performances in Leningrad, cradle of the Revolution, where the first shots were fired at the Winter Palace from the battleship *Aurora,* a city of huge mills and strong working-class traditions. It was quite natural that the dancers were a little nervous before starting out for Leningrad.

Moreover Leningraders are noted for their good taste in the arts. The city's many famous theatres, its great treasure-houses of art, such as the Hermitage and the Russian Museum, and its splendid architecture have helped to foster it. After the Revolution genuine art was brought into the people's midst. Although old traditions were not forsaken but developed, the approach to art was a new one. Art had to be

brought nearer and made more understandable to the great masses of the people.

Its appearance before the Leningrad public was a real test of the company's skill and powers. And it passed that test with flying colours. The house shook with applause and demands for encores. Newspaper reviewers said the company was responsible for the rebirth of folk art and hailed it as a great popularizer of that art.

After its performances in Leningrad the company went to the Ukraine in the summer of 1938, visiting Kiev, the capital, Vinnitsa, Dniepropetrovsk and the Donbas, where the dancers were given a very warm reception by the miners.

The company's travels enabled it to keep in close touch with the tastes and desires of the ordinary people. It now met with success wherever it went. Its triumphs were both a tribute to folk art, which for the first time in its history was finding vivid and talented expression on the professional stage, and to the high mastery of the dancers.

The company had now been in existence for one and a half years. It had become a well-knit group, its performances unmarred by discrepancies of style which might have been observed at an earlier stage. Constant rehearsals, the collection and study of folk-lore with an almost scholarly zeal, had now given the company a firm footing.

From the very outset it had made it a custom to perform to factory workers. Among its first audiences were the workers at some of Moscow's largest plants. It also gave performances to Army units, at agricultural fairs, and to scientists at the Moscow Scientists' Club.

Close contact with the people, whose dances the company was reviving on the stage, was a source of great enrichment. It made the dancers feel more certain than ever that they were on the right road. It helped them to observe and study the people they were portraying in dances on modern themes.

A visit to Gorky in the autumn of 1938 was another triumph for the company. The *Gorky Worker,* the local newspaper, spoke highly in its reviews of the company's aesthetic principles. It stressed that the folk

dances it staged were the genuine, unrefined dances of the people both in spirit and form, with the national flavour beautifully preserved, and that they were consummate works of choreographic art, perfect in every detail.

The company continued to travel. Both Moiseyev and his dancers attached great importance to its tours. New places, new audiences confirmed the dancers in their belief that they were doing a worth-while job in reviving and popularizing the folk dance.

Scenes changed with kaleidoscopic speed. The golden steppes of the Ukraine, the coal-fields of the Donbas, the pale twilight of the northern nights, the banks of the Volga, the inviting little towns round Moscow, the newly-built cities of the Urals flashed past the train windows, beckoning to the dancers, waiting to welcome them. The dancers took their art to these places and carried away fresh impressions of new towns, new beautiful scenery, and new people.

Travelling proved extremely beneficial. It gave the dancers an opportunity to get first-hand knowledge of the folk dances of many different nationalities living in the places they visited. They were able to study these dances in their "natural environment," in the midst of the people, scenery and life of which they were a part. This made it possible to greatly expand the repertoire.

Its tours were now taking the company to the most remote corners of the land. The dancers visited Central Asia, the Caucasus, the capitals as well as the small towns of many distant republics, even performing in far-away mountain settlements. Wherever the company went it made its business to get acquainted with local amateur and professional dance groups. Such acquaintance proved of mutual benefit. The Moiseyev dancers broadened their knowledge of local dancing traditions while local dancers were able to see how great professional mastery and a serious approach to folk art had transformed their dances.

After touring Central Asia and the Caucasus the company went to Byelorussia and again to the Ukraine. More dances were observed and scheduled for study.

During the first three years of its existence the Moiseyev dance company visited 35 Soviet towns and gave over 600 performances. It was an important period in the life of the company, in which its ability to tackle the many problems connected with the stage presentation of folk dances and its aesthetic principles were put to the test.

Then came a more severe test, a test not only for the dancers but for the whole land—the grim and terrible year of 1941, when the German fascists set foot on Soviet soil. The whole Soviet people lined up to do battle, some rifle in hand, others doing their bit in plants or on the fields, in science or the arts. "When the cannons roar, the muses are silent," is a well-known saying. But it cannot be applied to the wartime years in the Soviet Union. Soviet men of letters and art flung themselves into the very thick of battle, using art and literature as weapons against the enemy. The Moiseyev dancers spent 18 months at the fronts, travelling from one sector to another. They went to the Urals and Siberia and there performed to wounded men at army hospitals. The company spent four and a half months with the Pacific Fleet, giving over 130 performances.

And finally after their many wanderings the dancers returned to Moscow to set to work on new programmes.

Its fifth anniversary the company marked by giving its 1,000th performance. It now had a repertoire with a great variety of folk dances. It had mastered the technique of folk dancing and the art of moulding choreographic images with great effect. More than that, it was now using the folk idiom to produce new dances. In the five years of its existence it had therefore accomplished a great deal.

Close touch with life and ordinary people made the dancers more keenly aware of what most appealed in their art to the public.

In many different ways the company continued to strengthen the ties it had established with its audiences. Helping amateur dance circles at factory clubs was one way, as it did in Miass, Nizhny Tagil, and Chelyabinsk while touring the east of the Soviet Union. In token of gratitude the workers presented various gifts to the company; it received

a clay model showing one of its dances from the Kirov plant in Chelyabinsk and a bas relief from the Magnitogorsk iron and steel mills, for example.

The Soviet people fought with might and main to win the war. And they won it. But the aftermath of the war was not easily overcome. Areas liberated from the fascist hordes lay in smouldering ruins. The horrors of war were still vivid in the minds of the people and they were constantly reminded of them by the gaping windows, the charred remains of German tanks. It seemed that it would take years for the people to recover from their bleeding wounds and the heavy losses inflicted on them, that gaiety and laughter were a long way off as yet.

But those who imagined so were wrong. Life began to revive very quickly. Public buildings and dwelling houses rose from the ashes. And a longing for joy, for sunshine, for laughter, once again took possession of people's hearts. Hungrily, painfully the people craved for art.

After the war the Moiseyev company found the doors of the country's largest concert halls open to it. Its dancers were once more welcome guests in Leningrad, Gorky, Kiev, Odessa, Kemerovo and Sverdlovsk.

In 1956 the company again found itself among the Donbas miners. It went to the Donbas in answer to an appeal issued by people working in the arts in the Ukraine to all Soviet art workers to go down the mines and entertain the miners. Before leaving for the Donbas the company's leading members got in touch with the miners' union and local organizations to plan the programmes jointly and draw up the itinerary. When they arrived in the Donbas the dancers met many of the miners informally, made friends with them and learned much about their everyday life. But through the colourful and emotional language of their art they were able to establish even closer contact with these celebrated workers of the Soviet collieries.

If the routes of the company's many tours were traced on a map, it would show that in the twenty-two years of its existence the dancers had been to more than four hundred Soviet towns and covered more than one

hundred and sixty thousand kilometres of territory by highway, rail, air and sea.

But there are still corners of the country where the dancers have never appeared. There are old friends eager to see them again. And no matter how much of their native territory the dancers cover it is so vast that there will always be more places waiting to bid them welcome.

THE CITIES OF THE WORLD

Artists travel in quite a different way from anyone else. Although they too gather impressions and are as eager as tourists to see the beauties of new and strange lands, they never for a moment cease to be preoccupied with their art. Wherever they go their work is always uppermost in their minds. So it was with the Moiseyev dancers. They were thrilled by what they saw in the new lands they toured. But they were ready to forego a visit to the most fascinating and famous place, which the tourist would not miss for anything in the world, in order to spend an extra hour rehearsing—in the hope that it would help them to achieve a greater degree of perfection. To them the most important thing was always their audience.

The reaction of an audience, ranging from mild interest to wild enthusiasm, gives surprising insight into the national character. In this respect the artist may learn more about the real nature of a people than the tourist. To the tourist, for example, the Londoner may appear somewhat stiff and reserved. But the Moiseyev dancers will tell you that Londoners are warm and cordial.

Communion through art with the people of various lands and nationalities has been a source of great inspiration to the dancers, and has given them a keener sense of the significance and impact of their art.

A scene from the **Two May Firsts Suite**

"Forward to Victory!" This is a scene from the **Partisans.** The choreographer introduces effective movements to show the flashing speed with which the partisans dash into combat. Lev Golovanov is shown in the whirling swiftness of a leap

It has increased their feeling of responsibility, made them more self-critical and induced them to work even harder.

During the last fifteen years the Moiseyev dancers have visited many foreign lands and seen scores of cities, beautiful, unique, unforgettable. Travelling has not only broadened their knowledge of the world but has deepened their understanding of art.

The company's first tour abroad was in 1942. The dancers went to the Mongolian People's Republic and gave seventy-eight performances there to extremely enthusiastic audiences–to people who live amidst scenery which has retained a strange primordial fascination, who cherish dearly the legends of their ancestors. And the dancers' impressions of Mongolia and what they were able to learn there went into the makings of *Mongolian Statuette,* a delicate and graceful dance, and the delightful *Tsam,* based on a Mongolian legend.

The year 1945 saw the company perform beneath the pale skies of Finland. Here was austere scenery, cold granite, northern lakes, and busy cities such as Helsinki, and Tammerfors. It looked as though the fiery, tempestuous art of the Soviet dancers might strike a jarring note in this northern land. Yet the hearts of the Finns went out to the Soviet dancers and the reception they were given was no less warm than in other places they had visited.

In the autumn of the same year the company started out on a long tour of the Danube countries–Rumania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria and Yugoslavia. It took to these countries a new programme specially prepared for them and mainly composed of dances of Slav peoples. It was for the first time in its history that the company was presenting a full programme with dances of nationalities living outside the Soviet Union. And the company felt great responsibility in showing its new dances in the lands where they were born and had been danced for centuries.

The first land to be visited was Rumania. When the train crossed the boundary at Ungeny, from Soviet Moldavia to Rumania, there was no marked change in the landscape. Here in Rumania stretched the same cornfields as in Moldavia and on both sides of the border the villagers

wore tall fur hats. Only the quaint architecture of Jassy, the first large town, made the dancers feel that they were in a new land. Yet the common features were many: the whirling, whimsical Moldavian dances were certainly close in spirit to the Rumanian. The Moiseyev dancers spoke to the friendly Rumanians in the language of art. Their message carried with equal force to all audiences, those of gay Bucharest, noisy, bustling Constanta, ancient Cluj and Timisoara and other towns. The twenty-seven performances given by the company were attended by over thirty-three thousand people. And these audiences constituted only a small part of those who wanted to see the dancers—the tickets went like hot cakes.

Rumanian audiences were charmed by the winning grace of the *Russian Suite,* the dramatic intensity of *Khorumi* and the fiery zest of the *Chernomorochka.* Spectators, critics and art scholars were unanimous in their high praise of the company's artistry and its ability to combine a high degree of choreographic skill and knowledge with the spontaneity characteristic of folk art.

After bidding farewell to the warm-hearted Rumanians, the dancers crossed the Danube to the beautiful scenery and fertile soil of Bulgaria. From Sofia they went to Plovdiv, which tourists have christened "the most oriental city" in Europe, and to Varna, a charming seaside resort, to Sliven and Stara Zagora. The company performed in city squares and open-air stadiums as well as indoors. A concert was given at Yunak, Sofia's sports stadium, where forty-five thousand spectators cheered the Soviet dancers. In Plovdiv and Stara Zagora the company gave matinée and evening performances in the city squares.

All the time it was travelling the company was getting a better knowledge of the life and customs of many nationalities. The dancers were able to make a close study of the handicrafts flourishing in such lands as Bulgaria, Rumania and Czechoslovakia. Folk crafts are highly valued and dearly cherished in these lands.

The exquisite needlework of Rumanian craftswomen, the brightly patterned rugs, the attractive pottery, all bore witness to the people's talent, taste and artistic imagination. Here was form and design that had de-

veloped over centuries. The nimble fingers of the embroideress and the deft hands of the potter have inherited their skill from generation after generation of anonymous craftsmen. History has not preserved their names but it has preserved their art. Examples of it are on display in the folk art museums of Bucharest, Sofia and Budapest, at the carpet bazaars in any Rumanian town and at the potters' markets in Sofia. And all that the dancers saw of folk art has proved of infinite value to them in their subsequent work in the field of folk dance.

But they saw that which was even dearer to their hearts—the art of the dance, no less ancient than any of the other arts. In Rumania the dancers attended performances given by many choreographic groups, among them those of the ballet company of the State Opera, the Army Dance Ensemble, the National Confederation of Labour's company and of amateur dance groups. Heated discussions and private conversations with individual dancers and choreographers followed these performances. There was an exchange of ideas, a give-and-take, a sort of mutual instruction, stimulating and beneficial to both sides.

In the countries they visited the Soviet dancers had the opportunity to listen to many folk dance melodies, to see folk dances and national costumes in their natural setting. People everywhere were only too willing to help the Soviet dancers. Thus in Hungary the company learned six new dances. Later it was able to put to good use the impressions it gained during its travels.

Two months were spent in Czecholsovakia—December 1945 and January 1946. The Soviet dancers gladly responded to the eager demands for encores, performances often lasting three and a half hours instead of the prescribed two or two and a half. The audiences were so delighted that there would be as many as eighteen or twenty curtain calls. Spectators in Prague and other towns wrote down their impressions in visitors' books in which many heartfelt words were addressed not only to the dancers but to the Soviet people in general.

After its visit to Czechoslovakia the company travelled through Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia and Poland. Everywhere the Slav dances elic-

ited the warmest response from the audience. Krakow went wild about the company's rendering of the *Krakowiak.*

This was the company's first major tour abroad and its first great international success. In the years that followed, the Moiseyev company visited these countries, as well as the German Democratic Republic and Finland, over and over again, everywhere winning the hearts of the public. One of its concerts was given at the Budapest stadium to an audience of one hundred thousand. The dancers also performed before the Danube-Black Sea Canal builders in Rumania.

It is to the broad masses, to the common people and simple workers that the Moiseyev dancers are most eager to carry their art. And it is among them that they enjoy the greatest success.

In 1954 it was with some misgivings that the company went to China to dance to the newly-liberated Chinese people. China, it must be remembered, is an extremely artistic country. Art is in the blood of the Chinese. One need only go into their homes, to watch them in their everyday life, to see how deeply ingrained is the love of beauty and art in them. In his book on the Chinese theatre Sergei Obraztsov, founder of one of the Soviet Union's best puppet theatres, tells us that lorry drivers keep in their cabs little wooden cages with delicately-made toy grasshoppers. The grasshopper with its gossamer wings, its thin legs and long quivering antennae is a great favourite with Chinese artists, ivory cutters and poets. It is a poetic symbol, part of the artistic tradition of a people whose hearts are full of poetry.

And it was before this people, with an aesthetic sense and taste which had been developing for thousands of years, that the company now had to appear. It performed to the people in the full sense of the word and not to a privileged few. Performances were often given at stadiums and in public squares with audiences of as many as forty thousand.

There was an atmosphere of great elation at all the concerts, both spectators and dancers feeling above everything else that they were representing two great fraternal republics. People came to the performances carrying flags and streamers. After speeches in both languages,

Tamara Mozalevskaya is very impressive as a young girl partisan. Her dance is composed of difficult movements demanding great elevation and she performs them with consummate skill

Naval Suite—this is a scene in which the highly rhythmic movements of the dancers resemble a ship's machine in motion

An exciting moment at the goal—a scene from **Football**

the members of the audience rose and sang "Moscow-Peking," a very popular song, both in China and the Soviet Union, dedicated to Soviet-Chinese friendship.

Among the numbers performed by the company were two Chinese dances–*Dance with Ribbons* and the *Sanchakou*. These were well received, hailed both as evidence of warm sentiments and respect for the people of China and as examples of great choreographic skill.

Moreover these dances did much to bring the company closer to China's artistic circles. They were common ground on which the two could meet and discuss artistic problems. Members of the company taught Chinese dancers Russian, Tajik and Georgian dances and themselves studied old and modern Chinese dances, among them *Gathering the Tea Harvest, The Lotus Dance, Dance of the Lions, The Stubborn Mule,* and *Dance with Drums*. Get-togethers with the orchestra of the Peking Experimental Theatre and that of the Central Song and Dance Ensemble proved extremely interesting. Chinese choreographers made a close study of the work of the group, accompanying it for 45 days on its tour of Chinese towns. Much that was of interest in relation to problems of the dance was discussed. However, it was the presentation of Chinese dances that helped most in creating closer contacts between Chinese and Soviet choreographers and dancers.

In his choreography of the Chinese dances Moiseyev boldly re-interprets the old traditional forms of the dance. In the view of Chinese choreographers he has succeeded in imparting great expressiveness to the Chinese dances he has staged. Wu Hsiao-pong, the eminent ballet-master, points out in an article in the *Jenminjihpao* on the Soviet dancers that a thoughtful approach to the treasures of folk dancing invests the dance with force, colour and genuine national spirit. He also stresses the fact that the Soviet dancers have mastered the peculiarities and conventions of the movements of the Peking classical opera. In discussing Moiseyev's choreography of the Chinese mime *Sanchakou* he cites it as an example of a truly creative approach to the folk dance.

On leaving China the Soviet dancers brought away with them more than the notations of a number of wonderful Chinese dances which they

had learned during their stay there. They carried away memories of friendly meetings with the Chinese people, of smiles and words of cheer with which they had been greeted everywhere. They carried away with them memories of the rich, vivid and unique art of China, which inspires the people of that great country who are building a new socialist world. And the dancers knew that they were leaving behind them many friends, and colleagues, as well as grateful and delighted spectators.

The company regarded its visit to Paris in 1955 as an important page in its history. The Paris public was spoilt—it had seen the best of what the world had to offer in the way of art. Success in Paris was as good as world recognition. The dancers gave much thought to their programme but they did so without any misgivings. They had the poise and confidence that comes after long years of hard work and continual rewards. They were going to Paris after having danced before countless Soviet spectators, also strict judges of dancing, and before audiences in Europe and Asia, invariably winning approval and scoring success.

One thing was certain—the Parisian public was interested. Most of the tickets were sold out even before the company set foot on French soil. That in itself was significant. Paris was a city with no less than 50 theatres and 300 cinemas where the appearance of world-famous artists was quite a commonplace. *France Soir* commented that when three million francs worth of tickets had been sold for a play at the Madeleine Theatre before the première, this had been considered a fantastic figure. Yet before the Moiseyev company's first performance sales had run to 25 million francs.

There was much rehearsing before the company made its appearance in Paris. A good many people, among them actors, students and dance lovers, were attracted to the rehearsals which turned into performances in miniature. The full-dress rehearsal was an important event in itself. But the real tribute still lay ahead. The opening performance, as all subsequent ones, was scheduled to take place in Palais de Chaillot, in the largest auditorium in Paris, with a seating capacity of 2,700.

Prejudices and doubts entertained in regard to Soviet art were dispelled soon after the curtain rose on the opening performance held in

Paris on October 3, 1955. The excellence of the dancers was such that it recalled the glorious traditions of the Russian ballet, Anna Pavlova's Paris performances and the Diaghilev seasons of the Russian musical theatre.

The Soviet dancers won their way to the hearts of the Parisian public. Curiosity gave way to deep interest, applause, at first restrained, grew into a stormy tribute. Soon shouts of "bravo" followed every number. When the performance was over the audience continued to cheer the dancers for fifteen minutes. The dancers, fatigued, but radiant and happy, eagerly responded to the continual demands for encores. Success was theirs and it was their companion all through their performances in Paris.

On the morning following the première the press of Paris paid the company ungrudging tribute. Reviewers called the première a brilliant success, spoke of the virtuosity of the male performers and the charm of the female dancers, and described the performance as a whole in such terms as a "theatrical miracle," "the height of perfection," "a triumph of Russian choreography." After the première it was impossible to get tickets, even for the last performance.

Paris was very friendly and the Soviet dancers eager to reciprocate the friendliness. Hence the public never needed to beg long for numbers to be repeated and when Paris students and artistic circles asked for special performances at reduced prices, the dancers gladly conceded. The company also gave a benefit performance the proceeds of which went towards the restoration of Versailles. In all, the company spent 36 days in Paris and gave 31 performances which were attended by 110,000 people.

Busy as they were with rehearsals and performances, still the dancers managed to see a great deal of Paris and its people. They admired the sombre beauty of Nôtre Dame. They went to the Louvre. How they had looked forward to seeing its priceless treasures such as Mona Lisa or the Venus of Milo. They visited Versailles. Reverently they stood before the Wall of the Communards and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

There were many opportunities of talking to Parisians—at informal meetings, in museums and even in the streets. A parliamentary delegation greeted the company at the close of its visit. The Soviet dancers listened to a cordial address by Prof. Vaille, vice-chairman of the Franco-Soviet Friendship Society, who thanked them for their performances, which had helped to promote greater understanding between the two nations. M. Forcinal, a Radical deputy to the French Parliament, said that the company had conquered the French capital and by so doing had sown fresh seeds of friendship between the French and Russian peoples.

The Moiseyev dancers were heartily welcomed at the Grand Opera and in the Bourbon Palace where the National Assembly of France meets. The dancers cordially shook hands with members of the Assembly and exchanged words of greeting with them. Igor Moiseyev was presented with the honourable badge of a deputy to the National Assembly. With the Grand Opera company members the Moiseyev dancers discussed problems of art. The National Academy of Music and Dance invited Moiseyev to become an honorary member. All this was evidence of a strengthening of cultural ties between the U.S.S.R. and France.

With a deep sense of gratification the Moiseyev dancers made their departure, leaving behind them a gay and friendly land, where they felt that art was truly loved and appreciated.

Across the Channel lay England, another country where the dancers had never set foot. London, after gay, vivacious Paris, seemed somewhat austere and sombre. London fogs and left-handed traffic—one needed time to get used to them. Thus at first the Soviet dancers felt under a certain constraint, finding it difficult to adjust themselves to the unfamiliar surroundings of this new European capital.

It also took the dancers time to get used to the huge Empress Hall where they had to appear. Its floor served as an enormous skating-rink where skaters came to train in the mornings. For the dancers' performances in the evening the ice was not removed but covered with planks. Chairs were placed for the spectators and a platform set up for the danc-

ers. After the audience was seated there still remained a good deal of vacant space. And that great empty vacuum behind the spectators did not help to make the dancers feel any more at ease in this huge, uninviting hall. And on top of it all it was dreadfully cold, so much so that some of the spectators brought rugs to wrap round their legs.

However, despite the various discomforts, a warm and friendly atmosphere was established at the very first performance. The cold failed to damp the ardour of the audience or the zeal of the dancers. In one of his articles on the company's tour of England Moiseyev wrote: "We felt the warm response to our dancing, saw smiling faces and the light of pleasure in the eyes of hundreds and thousands of people who came to see our performances."

The items on the programme presented at the première gave the dancers the opportunity of showing the wide range of their gifts. The virtuosity of the soloists, the good teamwork of the whole company, the high technical standards, splendid acting, poetry and humour, tender romance and grim tragedy—all these qualities were revealed to London spectators. They saw the old choral round dances, a finished choreographic suite like *Partisans.* Russian and Ukrainian folk dances full of fire, comical dances such as *Football* and *Yurochka,* and various sailors' dances. And in London, as in Paris, the audience paid spontaneous tribute to the Soviet dancers. Unrestrained enthusiasm had seemed natural from the impulsive and exuberant French, but from the English it came as a surprise to the Soviet dancers.

London reviewers were high in their praise, admiring the "wonderful zest, joy of living and energy" of the Soviet dancers. "On come the dancers, up goes the Iron Curtain," ran the headline of an article in the *Daily Herald* by Hannen Swaffer. This British journalist pointed out very aptly that "wherever the common people meet, however divergent may be their politics, they express in smiles a mutual friendship which they cannot express in words."

A cordial welcome was tendered to the Moiseyev dancers by the British people. British workers, students, actors of the Unity Theatre,

trade-unionists, all tried to show their friendly attitude to the dancers and to the Soviet country which they represented.

The Soviet dancers were greatly impressed by their talk with Hewlett Johnson, the Dean of Canterbury, who spoke of the great mission of Soviet art abroad. "What you are doing here in England," the Dean said, "is better and more convincing than any kind of propaganda." He stressed the fact that "art was an effective and mighty means of strengthening the friendship between the two nations."

A special performance was given for British TV audiences. However, even before that two of its numbers, the *Gopak* from the *Ukrainian Suite* and the *Nanai Folk Game* had been televized. Thus the art of this Soviet dance company found its way into many British homes and its audiences ran into approximately fourteen million.

During their stay in Britain the Soviet dancers received many letters from ordinary British people. Apart from admiration for the fine performances of the Soviet dancers the letters reflected the British people's longing for friendship with the Soviet Union. This they stated in their letters with cordial sincerity. One British mother of a family of five wrote that it was important for the common people of both lands "to understand each other better and like each other more." "Watching your performance made me proud that the Soviet Union and I are friends," ran another letter.

The closing performance was a friendly and heartfelt leavetaking. In answer to demands for encores the Ukrainian *Gopak,* particularly successful with the audience, was repeated several times. Spectators at the Empress Hall seemed to have thrown off all the restraint typical of the British public. Bouquets were thrown on to the stage, people rose from their seats and clapped their hands to the rhythm of the music. With stormy applause and loud cheers the audience paid tribute to the Soviet dancers and bid them a cordial and sincere farewell.

The dancers' first impression of London as of a somewhat sombre city had faded. Their hearts now warmed to this great English city. As in Paris, they did a good deal of sightseeing here. The British Museum was one of the places they visited, and among other things they saw there

antiquities of Egypt, Greece, and other countries they were scheduled to visit before long.

Soon afterwards, in 1957, the Moiseyev dancers had the opportunity to gaze upon the pyramids not in the museum but "in reality"—in the sands of Egypt under the scorching Egyptian sun.

During its long travels in its own country and abroad the company had had occasion to meet people of many nationalities and to learn something of many ancient cultures. Egypt, they knew, was a land in which the features of ancient civilization were intermingled with the fresh vigour of a new life. The Egyptians were now a liberated nation, working, building, ploughing the earth with new modern methods and creating a new art.

There was much excitement in Egypt when the news spread about the forthcoming visit of the Moiseyev dancers. A press conference was held in the Cairo Opera House. Professor Mahmud Nahas, deputy director of arts and director of the Cairo Opera, delivered an address at the conference in which he spoke of the importance of the forthcoming tour in promoting cultural contacts between Egypt and the U.S.S.R. The Egyptian press devoted much space to the Moiseyev company and published many photographs of its dancers.

The Soviet dancers gave two performances to the population of Port Said at a large stadium. Here they found themselves dancing to a very gaily attired audience: the girls wore bright-coloured print frocks and the men were clad in white. Over the stadium was a gigantic awning made of carpet fabric. It protected the five thousand persons who came to see the Soviet dancers and the dancers themselves, who were unaccustomed to such heat, from the scorching rays of the sun. The stadium at Port Said proved too small to seat all who were eager to see the Soviet dancers, many having arrived from outlying towns.

Many sincere friends were made in Egypt. Envoys of a democratic art, the Soviet dancers were eager to come into closer contact with the people, gladly responding to all invitations from them. Thus the Soviet dancers gave several performances to Egyptian youth in the Assembly Hall of Cairo University, its walls almost bursting with the enthusiasm

of its youthful audience. During one of the intervals a young girl student went backstage and said very simply: "Never before have we seen dances that are so full of the zest of life. Your performances have given us the opportunity of learning a great deal about your country and its people."

Its tour took the company to three large Egyptian towns—Cairo, Port Said and Alexandria. The dancers found it a thrilling experience to be in this ancient land, now reborn, of yellow sands, green palms, dazzlingly azure sky, the land of the Sphinx and the tall pyramids gleaming obliquely in the hot sun. The Soviet dancers were learning much about Egypt, while the Egyptians were seeing at close range the representatives of a culture which was little known to them. Commenting on the Soviet company's tour, the Egyptian press stressed its great educational value.

In a newspaper article by Sidki Gabakhandi we read: "Russia was an unknown land to me before; but after the performance I felt I had been in that country and seen the life of the Soviet people. Words cannot describe the great mastery and artistry of the performers and choreographer. Theirs is a magic art." Abd ar Rahman, a distinguished man of letters, wrote in the same enthusiastic vein. He was able to perceive in the inspired excellence of the Soviet dancers more than their art: "I was one of the numerous spectators enchanted by their art, and in the dances of the company could see the past, radiant present and even more radiant future of the Russian people."

Homage was paid to the Soviet dancers in different ways, depending on the speaker or writer. One expressed his delight in prose, another in verse, still another compared the skill of the Soviet company with the choreographic art in all the countries which he had visited. There were those who regretted they did not know the Russian language so that they might use it to express their appreciation of the splendid art of the Soviet dancers. There were many speeches and letters but they were all alike in their enthusiastic admiration for the artistic excellence of the Soviet dancers and in their sincere longing for friendship with the Soviet people.

There were get-togethers between the Soviet dancers and members of artistic circles in Egypt. At one of these Moiseyev delivered a talk on Soviet choreographic art, and Egyptian dancers performed their national dances to the Soviet company. Here among new, sincere friends, under torrid African skies, the Moiseyev company celebrated its 20th anniversary. It is perhaps unusual for artists to mark an important jubilee like that away from their native land–but not for the Moiseyev dancers who spend most of their time travelling.

There were still other countries in the East waiting for the Soviet dancers to visit them. After leaving Egypt the company went to the Lebanon. They spent nine days in Beirut, the capital, and gave there nine performances instead of the scheduled six.

Every evening the dancers performed to a full house. The fact that the hall was located quite a distance from the centre did not prevent eager spectators from flocking to its doors. Audiences saw reflected in the dances the life of the Soviet people. They could delight in the beauty and charm of images, patterns and colours that were new to them.

"The Soviet dancers have not only shown Lebanese audiences the manifold dances of their land," wrote one of Beirut's newspapers, "but have made it possible for us as we watched them to transport ourselves to the vast Ukrainian fields and meadows, and to visualize the Soviet partisans in action in the years of the war." Another newspaper saw a deeper significance in the triumph of the Soviet dance company. "... While the Soviet Union has given us the possibility of seeing its friendly art which helps to bring the nationalities closer together," it wrote, "the Americans send us warships. What different aims the two missions pursue is clear. Assuredly the people of the Lebanon prefer art to guns." And that they really preferred art was shown beyond a doubt by both the comments of the press and the delight of the spectators.

After their tour of the Lebanon the dancers went to Greece. The people of this land of antiquity and Hellenic love of art and beauty greeted the dancers by lining up in queues at the ticket offices. It was with a sense of heightened responsibility and elation that the dancers performed in that country. The attacks levelled by some hostile newspapers

were not able to damp the high spirits of the dancers as a result of their great successes and of their acquaintance with the beauties that Greece had to offer. The *Ethnos*, for example, tried hard to find "propaganda" in the dances. But what was mostly not to this newspaper's liking was that the spectators up in the gallery were "full of enthusiasm for the Soviet Union." And indeed the cheap seats were all bought up by the workers and students, who were eager to show both their appreciation of Soviet art and their friendliness for the Soviet Union. This newspaper, however, had deliberately overlooked the fact that the *entire* audience had paid enthusiastic tribute to the artistic excellence of the dancers. This was pointed out by newspapers more objective in their views. "The great optimism of Soviet art is the secret of its success," wrote the *Avgi*.

The tour of Egypt, the Lebanon and Greece ended with more triumphs for the Moiseyev dancers. They were now on their way to their homeland. The following year they set out again, this time on an extensive tour of the United States and Canada, a good-will mission, bringing the company greater success than ever and revealing to overseas audiences the rich beauty of our socialist art.

People in the United States eagerly awaited the arrival of the Soviet company. American newspapers and magazines carried photographs of the dancers, welcoming cultural exchanges between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. "Such exchanges," wrote the *New York Herald Tribune*, "help to break down barriers between peoples." America knew of the homage London and Paris had paid to the Soviet dancers and that added to their glory.

The successes of the company's very first performances in New York exceeded all expectations. American audiences cheered and applauded wildly. Everywhere the press paid ungrudging tribute to the Soviet dancers.

More than half a million Americans saw the dancers perform on the stage and fifty million over TV. A medal was released in honour of the company.

American audiences, as they watched the numerous folk dances performed with superb mastery by the Soviet dancers, were deeply touched

by their beauty. A wealth of movement, melody, colour and radiance flooded the concert halls. The dancers brought to the American stage the breath and spirit of a vast faraway land and its many peoples who were full of creative vigour and unconquerable optimism.

"It is a folk dance troupe," wrote the *New York Herald Tribune*, "composed of enormously attractive and talented dancers representing the many and varied heritages of several distinctive regions of the Soviet Union."

Artists worthy of the name never fail to reach the hearts of the spectators and carry their message across the footlights. With the true inspiration of artists, the dancers of the Moiseyev company not only taught Americans to appreciate the folk dances of their homeland but to delight in the charm and beauty of entirely unfamiliar dance forms, images and patterns. At each performance the audience was infected with the joy and whirling gaiety that swept the stage.

An atmosphere of friendship, good cheer and hospitality surrounded the dancers in the United States. Inviting the Soviet dancers to spend an evening with her family, Mrs. Betty Conrad, a mother of ten children, said: "We shall never forget the Sunday performance you gave." The Soviet dancers received many invitations to visit the homes of Americans who wished to become better acquainted with Soviet people and with the dancers whose performances they had so greatly enjoyed.

Mr. Sol Hurock, an outstanding figure of American theatre business circles who acted as the company's impresario during its American tour, declared that, in his opinion, no better reception and greater acclaim could have been accorded to the Soviet dancers. This has made Mr. Sol Hurock conclude that the Moiseyev company was the most talented dance group which had ever visited the U.S.A.; it has therefore won such high tribute from the American public.

During its more than two months' tour of the United States the company had occasion to perform in some of the largest cities of America. Thousands of people saw it and there were many more thousands who had wished to see it. After televizing one of the performances, the "Sibias" television company was literally deluged with letters and

telegrams in which spectators expressed their appreciation and gratitude.

Audiences in New York, Washington, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Boston, Cleveland, all lost their hearts to the Moiseyev dancers. The company also scored tremendous success in Canada, performing in Montreal and Toronto.

The dancers themselves had derived much from their tour of America and Canada. They tried to get as closely acquainted as possible with Americans and Canadians and with their art. American audiences cheered enthusiastically when the Soviet dancers performed several American folk dances, which they had rehearsed on the spot.

It is worth noting that the American press had never paid such unanimous tribute to any form of artistic endeavour as has fallen to the lot of the Moiseyev dancers. All the newspapers and magazines, regardless of their political sympathies, all reviewers, whatever their standing, spoke in such high superlatives as "fantastic," "superb," "magnificent" of the Soviet dancers' performances.

In its review of one of the performances, the *New York Herald Tribune* wrote: "More than three thousand Americans have made friends—over the footlights—with some one hundred travellers from the Soviet Union." "... the Russians have made a mighty effective move in sending us a mass of smiling, richly talented ambassadors." All the newspapers admitted that the company had "conquered the United States capital." In summing up its impressions the *Washington Post,* Washington's leading newspaper stressed that "... the arts may yet build a bridge of understanding between Russians and Americans."

America's eager interest in the Soviet dancers' performances was in some measure an expression of their sincere interest in the Soviet land, a land which has amazed all nations by the speed of its development and the significant contributions it has made to world science and culture. It was the interest of ordinary people who desire peace and friendly relations with all nations.

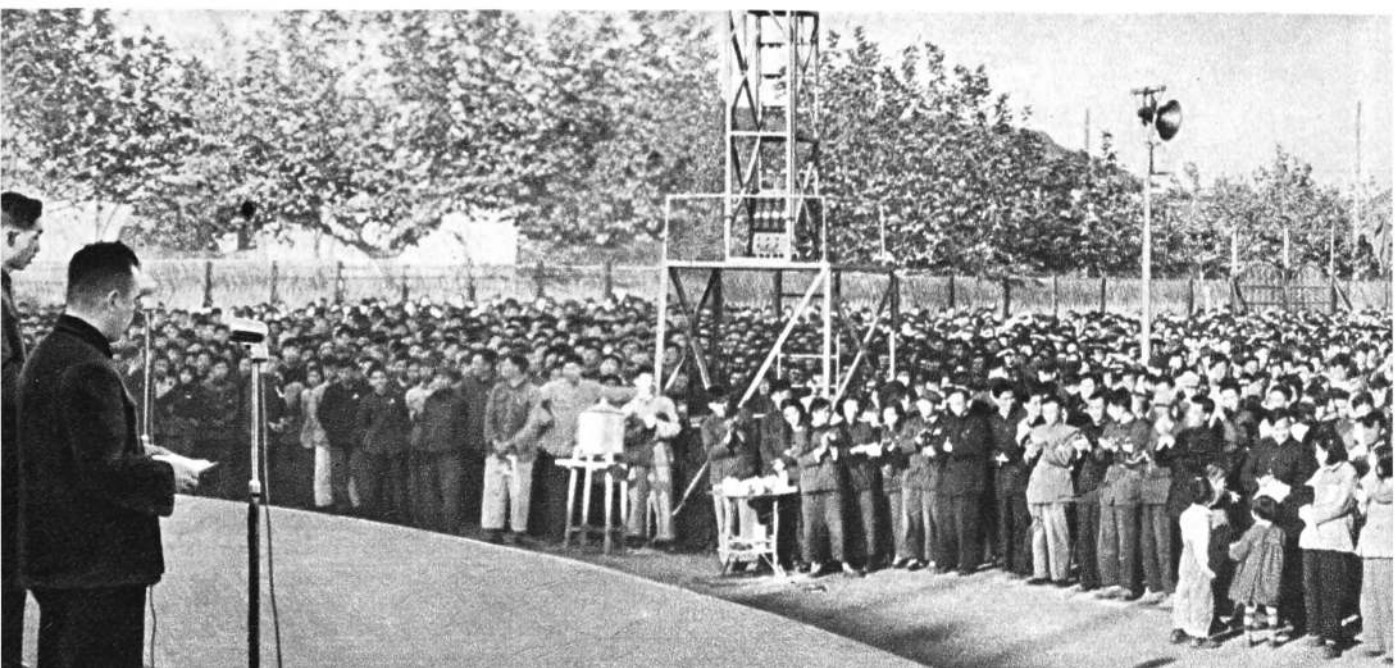
"The reception given to us speaks for itself," said Igor Moiseyev of the company's American tour. "It has shown the great benefit and neces-

Here is the road, a daily grind, hard work and persistence, that leads to the heights of the true mastery of dancing. Watch a training class conducted by Igor Moiseyev

Moiseyev dancers perform in Bulgaria

New York's dance club plays host to Moiseyev dancers and New-Yorkers teach them American dances

Moiseyev dancers warmly greet Chinese friends after their performance in the town of Khanchgou



A group of the Moiseyev dancers with Igor Moiseyev in the centre

sity of wider development of cultural exchange. No one will be any the worse for such exchange. It is to our mutual cultural advantage, and what is most important, it helps to consolidate ties of friendship between peoples."

True, some attempts were made to boycott the company's performances. But they were rebuffed by the public. Thus, at the entrance to Madison Square Garden, New York, during one of the performances at which fourteen thousand spectators enthusiastically welcomed the Soviet dancers, some shady individual carried a poster urging to stop United States-Soviet Union cultural exchanges. The whole incident was ridiculed by New York newspapers. They wrote that a vote had been taken that night on cultural exchange, fourteen thousand voting for cultural exchange and one-against. On another occasion the audience threw a ruffian out of the hall for disrespectful behaviour during the playing of the Soviet Union's national anthem. "Cold war retreats before the advance of art," may be said in conclusion of the company's tour of the United States and Canada.

The dancers returned to Moscow on July 1st. Here by order of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., signed by K. Y. Voroshilov on July 8th, 1958, the Moiseyev dancers were awarded orders and medals for outstanding services in promoting Soviet art. Igor Moiseyev himself was decorated with the Order of Lenin. The Order of the Red Banner of Labour was awarded to ballet-master A. Sitnikov, accordion conductor P. Rybakov and dancer A. Fyodorov. Dancers M. Alexandrov, V. Baldin, I. Voronkov, N. Danilov, S. Tsvetkov and G. Shlyapnikov received the "Badge of Honour." The "For Distinguished Labour" medal was awarded to G. Voronkova, V. Dobrina, G. Korolkova, V. Pak, O. Pudovinova, G. Ukolycheva, L. Khruleva, L. Shaldina among the female dancers, and V. Kopachevsky, S. Kulikov, B. Lavrukhin, V. Larionov, V. Sudakov, I. Filatov among the male dancers, as well as to accordion players V. Mokhov and N. Kadushkin.

After a short stay in their homeland the dancers were once again packing their bags. The great honour of representing Soviet art at the World Exhibition in Brussels now fell to their lot. With a sense of great

responsibility the dancers set off on their journey. They were going to Brussels, to an exhibition entitled "Man and Progress." They were going there as the ambassadors of a land where the most progressive order of society had been established, where all the greatest achievements of science have been placed at man's service, where in man's name a radiant optimistic art was being created. The company decided to present its best numbers to audiences in Brussels.

U.S.S.R. national days at the Brussels Exhibition celebrated on August 11, 12, and 13 of 1958 were important days in the history of the Exhibition. The performance of the Moiseyev dancers, the U.S.S.R. State Symphony Orchestra conducted by K. Ivanov and N. Anosov, the State Ukrainian Folk Choir (conducted by G. Veryovka) and other groups and individual artistes gave the inhabitants of Belgium and tens of thousands of visitors from other lands an opportunity to acquaint themselves in a brief period of time with the multi-national art of the great socialist country.

It was on August 10, 1958, that the Moiseyev dancers gave their first performance in Brussels to a packed hall seating two thousand persons at the Palais des Beaux Arts. Great tribute was paid to the art of the Soviet dancers by the public as well as by the eminent music and theatre critics who were present among the audience.

And all the performances the Moiseyev company gave during the U.S.S.R. national days were enthusiastically received by the public. Such numbers as *Polyanka,* a Russian folk dance, *Partisans,* a choreographic suite, and *Two Wrestling Boys,* a jolly game dance of the Nanai, a nationality of the Far North, virtually brought the house down.

Belgian newspapers were unanimous in their high praise of the Moiseyev dancers. *La Dernière Heure* pointed out that the Moiseyev company had won the greatest distinction at the World Art Festival. Marcel Lobet, well-known theatre critic for *Le Soir,* wrote: "... the folk dance in Igor Moiseyev's rendering has attained unexcelled perfection. Moiseyev's company is the best that we have seen in the course of this year so rich in miracles." "The Moiseyev company has elevated the folk dance to the level of genuine art," wrote *Le Peuple.*

The Moiseyev dancers were warmly received by audiences in all the Belgian cities they toured (Liége, Ostend, Namur, Charleroi, Antwerp, Knocke, Arlon) as well as in the capital of Luxembourg where the mayor awarded a gold medal to Igor Moiseyev.

It was generally acknowledged that the dances possessed rare charm and were invested with deep content. They acquainted Belgian audiences with samples of the folk dance heritages of the many peoples of the U.S.S.R. as well as with contemporary Soviet choreography. In less than one and a half months the company gave thirty-seven performances attended by nearly one hundred thousand spectators among whom were many tourists from the United States, France, England, Holland and other lands.

The company gave a farewell concert in the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels on September 18th. On this occasion Igor Moiseyev was presented with a Grand Exhibition Medal by Muns de Fernig, Commissioner-General of the Exhibition. "It is with a feeling of great regret that we say good-bye to you," said Vilems, Director of the Art Festival to the dancers. "Your company is the best that we have seen and shall yet see at our festival. On behalf of all the spectators who have attended your performances I thank you for your exhilarating art."

During the U.S.S.R. national days in Brussels the Soviet people's great creative efforts and striving for enduring peace and friendship among nations were once more demonstrated to the world, the Moiseyev dancers contributing their share.

The dancers returned to Moscow on September 19, 1958, heartily welcomed by their families, friends and the public at large.

In their spacious rehearsal rooms at the Chaikovsky Concert Hall several members of the company were handed diplomas granting them honorary titles. L. Golovan, T. Zeifert and I. Kartashov were awarded the title of People's Artiste of the R.S.F.S.R.; S. Galperin, conductor of the orchestra, the title of Merited Worker of Art; T. Golovanova (Mozalevskaya), I. Koneva (Chegodayeva), N. Kuznetsova, L. Skryabina (Timofeyeva) and V. Savin, the title of Honoured Artiste of the R.S.F.S.R.

The Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the R.S.F.S.R. warmly congratulated the dancers honoured with titles and wished the whole company success in winning further glory for Soviet art.

The Moiseyev company, now home after its many tours, knew that everywhere it had made friends in whose hearts its joyful art had left an imprint. Travelling had broadened the outlook of the dancers and had enriched them as artists. They had learned to understand the people of other countries, to see above all the good in every nationality and to inspire trust and friendliness. They had learned new dances, done notes and sketches of costumes for them and made a mental note of the habits and customs they observed in different lands. Igor Moiseyev said that his company was "an eager collector of folk dances in all parts of the globe."

There are still many more lands which the Moiseyev dancers hope to visit in the near future to delight audiences with the beauty and vigour of their dancing.

* * *

Today the Moiseyev dance company continues its wide range of creative activities and is indefatigable in its search for new forms.

The company has rendered an invaluable service to folk art by artistically regenerating it on the stage and winning for it an interested and eager public in many lands of the world. Moreover, because of its great success the company has been indirectly responsible for the springing up of similar dance companies in various republics within the Soviet Union as well as in a number of other lands.

Through a continual quest for new means of choreographic expressions, through trial and error, failure and success, the company has arrived at correct solutions which have enabled it to build up an extensive, versatile and multi-national repertoire.

In organizing this company Igor Moiseyev posed and in the course of his work solved a number of problems of the dance. These include décor,

the best use of stage space, rhythm and melody. And his solutions have in one way or another had repercussions in almost every dance theatre of the world.

Strains of the music of folk dances can be heard in concert halls, palaces of culture and factory clubs, now slow and dignified, now fiery, gay and impetuous. Always very much of the people, the folk dance embodies the mighty powerful spirit of the peoples that make up the land of socialism, their inexhaustible faith in the power of light over darkness, faith in the happy future of all progressive mankind.

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